



Infection prevention and control advice for environmental cleaning in non-healthcare settings (home and workplace)

This document provides information on routine cleaning and disinfection for non-healthcare settings during the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes settings such as homes, offices, workplaces, public areas, government buildings, reception areas, schools, childcare centres and shops.

SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, can survive on surfaces for some time, but effective cleaning and disinfection will kill the virus. The length of time the SARS-CoV-2 virus can survive on surfaces varies depending on several factors including the amount of virus expelled onto a surface by respiratory droplets, the type of surface exposed, the temperature and the humidity.

It is important to make sure surfaces are cleaned before any disinfection process occurs, as dirt and grime can affect how well a disinfectant works. You should clean the surface with detergent and warm water using a clean cloth, then follow with a disinfectant. You can also use combined detergent/disinfectant products.

For a disinfection solution to work, always prepare, apply and store the solution in line with the manufacturer's instructions. Information on which disinfectants to use against COVID-19 is available on the Therapeutic Goods Administration [website](#)

Cleaning principles

Carpets should be regularly vacuumed - ideally with a vacuum cleaner fitted with a high-efficiency particulate absorbing (HEPA) filter. It is important to follow a filter replacement schedule as per the manufacturer guidelines to ensure that the filter remains effective.

It is preferable to use disposable mop heads and cleaning cloths which must be changed regularly and disposed of after use. If you are unable to use disposable mops and cloths, then reusable mopheads and cloths can be used but should be laundered daily and allowed to air dry. All cleaning equipment (including mop heads) should be stored clean and dry.

Never mix different cleaning products as in some instances toxic gases can be generated. Avoid 'topping up' detergent or disinfectant containers as this can lead to contamination of the

containers. The manufacturer's instruction for use should always be followed, the product Safety Data Sheet should be readily available, and occupational safety and health (OSH) procedures should always followed.

Spraying or 'misting' a surface or area should be avoided.

Some products need to be on a surface for a specific period to ensure effectiveness against a contaminant. This is referred to as "contact time". The manufacturer's instructions for use should stipulate how much contact time is required.

How often should cleaning and disinfection be performed?

The recommended frequency of routine cleaning and disinfection depends on many factors such as the number of people who use a space, the purpose the space is used for, and the amount of soiling present. It also depends on whether surfaces are frequently or minimally touched (see Figure 1).

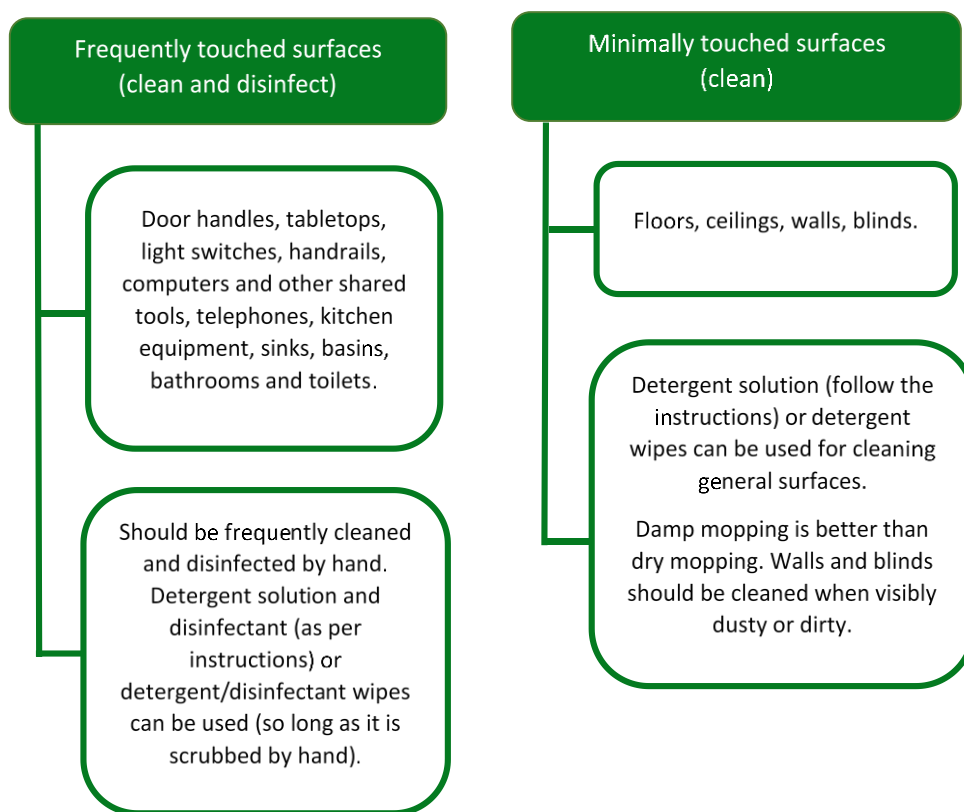
Frequently touched surfaces

Frequently touched surfaces have a higher risk of being contaminated and are therefore a potential source of transmission. Attention should be paid to shared workspaces, restrooms, staff changing rooms, lift buttons, horizontal surfaces such as tables, chairs and other frequently touched surfaces. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces several times a day.

Minimally touched surfaces

Clean minimally touched surfaces, such as floors, at least once a day. Spot clean areas, including ceilings, blinds and walls, as required. These areas do not usually need to be disinfected as well.

Figure 1: Routine environmental cleaning



Dishes and cutlery

Shared crockery and cutlery should be cleaned in a commercial or domestic dishwasher using appropriate dishwasher detergent. If a dishwasher is not available, reusable crockery and cutlery should be washed using hot water and dishwashing detergent. Care should be taken to ensure all items are thoroughly cleaned. Crockery and cutlery should be stored clean and dry in a cupboard or covered to prevent potential contamination from sneezes or coughs. Ensure effective hand hygiene is performed prior to and after handling crockery and cutlery.

Personal protective equipment for cleaning staff

- Cleaning staff should wear their routine personal protective equipment (PPE) when cleaning to fulfil their occupational safety and health (OSH) requirements. Cleaning staff should be advised to: use all chemicals in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- avoid touching their face, especially mouth, eyes and nose when cleaning.
- wear appropriate PPE for the cleaning products used, e.g. disposable gloves when cleaning.
- wear protective eyewear if handling bleach or other disinfectant solutions, to avoid eye splashes.
- perform hand hygiene after removing disposable gloves on completion of cleaning tasks.

Further information regarding environmental cleaning and disinfection principles for COVID-19 can be found at:

Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare: [Environmental cleaning :Information for cleaners](#)

Australian Government: [Information about routine cleaning and disinfection in the community](#)

Australian Government: [Information for employers](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [Cleaning and disinfecting your facility](#)

Safe Work Australia COVID 19 Information for workplaces: [Cleaning](#)

Government of Western Australia. Department of Health: [Infection prevention and control advice for environmental cleaning of a site following COVID-19 exposure](#)

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This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with disability.

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Version Control

Version	Date	Updates / Changes
1	17 March 2020	Original Document
2	30 March 2020	Title Updated to include Homes and Workplaces
3	07 April 2020	Updates to Appropriate Cleaning Products
4	04 May 2020	Updates to Appropriate Cleaning Products
5	27 November 2020	Updated General Cleaning Principles Shared cutlery and food utensils are not recommended Link to TGA approved products
6	21 April 2021	Added information on disinfection and environmental cleaning technologies Added routine environmental cleaning flowchart
7	17 September 2021	Removed details regarding deep clean for confirmed COVID exposure site as separate document now created.