



Cleaning Protocols for Self-Catering Properties and Short-Term Lets

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Pre-Introduction

The document has been reviewed by Public Health Scotland (PHS) and Infection Protection Control (IPC) (May 2022).

These Cleaning Protocols are guidance, rather than exact steps that you must take, or indeed law. The most important thing to do is to properly risk assess your business, and update that risk assessment periodically.

In response to an earlier request to review these protocols (July 2021), PHS noted the excellent work done by ASSC in producing such thorough guidance for their members to ensure that they could restart business as safely as possible. At that time, PHS also advised on a number of relaxations that they felt could be made to the protocols, based on changes to government and PHS guidance, as well as the progression of the pandemic.

PHS now feel that we are at a point where **businesses should not simply return to pre-pandemic practices**, i.e. business as usual, but should aim to build back better based on our increased awareness of good infection prevention and control practices. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of many of the mitigations that were put in place for COVID-19. These mitigations, however, have also shown to be successful in reducing the risk of other health outcomes during the pandemic and these should continue as best practice as we move forward.

Build Back Better

It is recommended that some key principles are embedded into regular practice. Emphasised measures should include (but needn't be limited to):

- Ensuring that there is a cleaning protocol in place for your properties, detailed with responsibilities assigned
- Ensuring that frequently touched surfaces and sanitary areas are cleaned regularly (where buckets of water are used for cleaning/mopping, ensuring that these are changed regularly and always after cleaning sanitary areas)
- Ensuring the use of products in line with manufacturer's instructions
- Ensuring maximisation of ventilation of properties – also encouraging the same from guests during their stay and upon departure where safe to do so
- Encouraging good hand hygiene by operators / staff, as well as continuing with the provision of hand hygiene products for customers

Please also refer to PHS guidance: <https://www.publichealthscotland.scot/publications/covid-19-information-and-guidance-for-workplaces-and-community-settings/covid-19-information-and-guidance-for-workplaces-and-community-settings-version-11/>

Introduction

This document is designed for all short-term accommodation operators: owners, hosts, and property management companies. It contains guidelines on how to clean properties safely in the context of COVID-19 and other similar viral and respiratory infections, and how to reduce the risk of spreading the virus.

It is the responsibility of every operator to ensure that they and their properties comply with health and safety legislation in relation to not only the accommodation, but also to ensure the safety of guests and staff in relation to respiratory infections. Limiting the spread of Virus' is therefore an additional consideration beyond your existing responsibilities.

In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, hosts, owners and managers of self-catering units and short-term rental operators have a public health responsibility to ensure that their accommodation is clean, not only to the eye, but also that any potential virus is removed to the best of their ability to prevent any spread. We must commit to adapting our procedures to fit the advancement of science and our knowledge of this virus, and other viruses that may be identified in the future.

Owners and operators have a duty of care to customers and staff even where specific legislation does not exist.

It is essential that housekeepers and cleaners are reminded or retrained to ensure that they understand what they need to do and why they are doing it.

It is important to have a robust cleaning protocol in place and that this is clearly identified to both cleaners and guests.

This document is divided into two main parts:

1. **High-level guidelines**
2. **Further information and resources.**

1. High level guidelines

Background to COVID-19

COVID-19 is a disease which is caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which can be passed via respiratory secretions (i.e. saliva) and faeces, and which can successfully live for up to 2 to 3 days on certain surfaces. COVID-19 is an “enveloped” virus, meaning that it is surrounded by a protective layer of fats and proteins.

SARs-Cov-2 is thought to be primarily transmitted via droplets through talking, coughing and sneezing from person-to-person.

There is building evidence in relation to this virus and the PHS guidance for non-healthcare settings should be referenced: <https://www.publichealthscotland.scot/media/12985/2022-05-06-information-and-guidance-for-workplaces-and-community-settings-version-11.pdf>

The risk of transmission through contact with surfaces or items (fomite transmission) is now considered to be very low. In most instances, this risk can be mitigated against through good hand hygiene and effective cleaning of surfaces.

72-hour quarantine of items such as books or other items is not routinely required provided other mitigations such as hand hygiene (before and after handling goods) and regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces are in place.

More information can be found at:

- <https://journals.asm.org/doi/abs/10.1128/AEM.00526-21?fbclid=IwAR2HaAr37Aa0S4nzeGAraU1QEzsNYIjvMvgpV7Vv9cbXBV8B8zB7Ohlr5pg&>
- <https://www.publichealthscotland.scot/our-areas-of-work/covid-19/covid-19-health-protection-guidance/guidance-for-health-and-social-care-settings/>

General advice

Standard cleaning procedures negate the need to leave properties vacant for any length of time between guests. Properties can be reoccupied after cleaning in line with the procedures laid out in these protocols.

It is important that Individual property owners or managers continue to make a professional judgement in terms of what is right for their businesses. Keep up to date with the latest guidance: <https://www.publichealthscotland.scot/our-areas-of-work/covid-19/covid-19-health-protection-guidance/guidance-for-health-and-social-care-settings/>

Ventilation has been evidenced as a key factor in trying to reduce the risk of spread of the virus. Good ventilation in our properties while anyone is working in them, and encouraging guests to keep the property well ventilated both while they are there and also when packing up to leave is best practice.

In reference to protective clothing for cleaners and housekeepers it is recommended that that the guidance within PHS non-healthcare settings is followed and currently states:

"Occupations should continue to use any PPE required as per local policies (business as usual). If a risk assessment of the setting indicates that a higher level of contamination may be present (for example, where unwell individuals have slept) or there is visible contamination with body fluids, then the need for additional PPE, such as an apron and gloves, should be considered."

Therefore, the wearing of gloves/apron/masks is not routinely recommended. Instead, standard procedures, i.e. what would be done in non-COVID times, would suffice unless where specific high risk situations arise.

For each changeover, cleaners should follow these steps:

- Risk Assessment (cleaning companies may have their own particular guidelines and risk assessment protocols)
- Load reduction: removal of waste and increased ventilation
- Deep cleaning process to remove any residual dirt on surfaces etc
- Professional disinfection: removes the unseen virus and leaves the space safe

Guests should be reminded about their responsibility to maintain personal hygiene levels and they must be provided with adequate hand washing facilities/supplies and cleaning products.

Risk Assessments

The core principle of this guidance is risk management. Therefore, all operators should conduct a risk assessment of their property.

Broadly speaking a risk assessment involves identifying potential risks within a property, and taking active steps to mitigate those risks.

One size does not fit all: Whilst every business and property's requirements are different the issues raised here are those which most will have in common. It will be up to you to identify your businesses specific risks and the mitigation required. After all you know your business better than anyone else.

The basic steps for undertaking a risk assessment are as follows:

1. **Look:** for the points of transmission for Covid-19, i.e. high touch points and identify rooms with minimal ventilation.
2. **Decide:** the likelihood of transmission via various touch points.
3. **Evaluate:** whether your current regime is sufficient or whether you need to do more and assess whether it is 'reasonably practicable' i.e. you may now need to wipe all the door handles with a disinfectant cleaner, which is reasonably practicable, but it will not be reasonably practicable to wipe down the garden gate at each changeover.
4. **Record:** your findings and draw up a simple list of guidance points for the person/s who are going to do the cleaning, even if it is yourself.
5. **Review:** as the danger of the virus recedes you may want to gradually alter your regime, e.g. reduce the rate of disinfection or re-introduce removed items. Put the review date on your Risk Assessment.

A risk assessment template is provided as part of this guidance.

Guidelines for Cleaning

The following steps will minimise the risk of the people responsible for cleaning, contracting the virus and ensuring the accommodation is safe for incoming guests.

1. Carry out a **Risk Assessment**. This should be done in advance and there will be protocols put in place (A risk assessment template is attached as part of this guidance).
2. Ask guests to **ventilate** the property.
3. Provide the correct **clothing and cleaning products** for the cleaners.
4. Cleaners should follow the following **cleaning process**:
 - Ensure property is ventilated whilst cleaning. If it is safe to do so, and doesn't compromise insurance, suggest that guests leave windows open prior to departure. This will ensure a reduction in any air borne virus in the property.
 - Understand the clean level required and have the appropriate equipment.
 - Wear appropriate clothing as per business as usual (unless in specific circumstances).
 - Prepare the area to be cleaned (reducing the load) – remove waste, remove dirty linen and towels and carry out initial cleaning required (ie load dishwasher, clear out fridge for leftovers, clear surfaces, etc).
 - Bedding & Linen: Property Owner/Manager/cleaners bag and remove linen (following protocols on good handling of linen, not shaking, PPE if required) it is argued that this is more controllable than guests undertaking this themselves. PHS noted that clean pillow and mattress protectors were advised for each changeover that potentially provided an additional layer of mitigation in the early stages of the pandemic as we were learning about the virus and its behaviour, but they do not believe that this is essential, given new evidence on fomite transmission. PHS do not believe that the rotation and quarantine of duvets and pillows between every set of guests is necessary. Naturally, standard procedures should be followed in the event that a pillow or duvet was found to be soiled or contaminated with body fluids during changeover.
 - Disposal of waste: waste of any kind should be placed in a plastic bag, tied and removed from the property and disposed of in an external bin. Hazardous waste should be disposed of according to government or council guidelines.

- Clean using general cleaning products – or hot soapy water taking a ‘common sense’ approach to cleaning and washing dishes, utensils, cups & cutlery.
- Disinfect using appropriate products and ensuring it is left on the surface for the required time to kill the virus: make sure the product will work on enveloped viruses. Look for EN14476 and follow manufacturers guidelines.
- Wash hands fully after the removal of protective clothing. Hand sanitiser can be used if warm running water is not available (There is limited evidence of difference in bacterial reduction across temperature).

Guidance for Operators and Hosts

Guests

Operators or Hosts should:

- Decide how they prefer to interact with guests during their stay.
- You may wish to consider using contact-free check-in methods but where operators are interacting with guests they should follow SG guidance on physical distancing and face coverings.
- Consider installing a hand sanitiser station at the entrance to the property.
- Ensure that guests have all relevant information that they need ahead of their arrival.
- Provide helpful information for guests via email, including:
 - Helpful numbers and contacts;
 - Guidance in case a guest shows COVID-19 symptoms;
 - Local walks / attractions that are open for use under social distancing rules;
 - Appliance instructions;
 - Heating instructions.
- Make sure that guests have access to appropriate guidance in the event that they develop COVID-19 symptoms.
- Advising guests that you have taken extra steps and letting them know that you have taken all possible steps to protect them and clean the property suitably is important
- Consider providing a cleaning standard tick list for transparency for the incoming guest.
- All properties should have adequate supply of cleaning materials, including virucidal disinfectant, tissues, hand wash and/or sanitiser and cloths, disposable gloves for guests use.
- Guests should be able and encouraged to maintain the cleanliness of the property during their stay.
- Guest Information Folders and other items within properties are fine for use, and in line with advice from PHS guests can be reminded of good hand hygiene before and after handling items within properties

COVID-19 or Other Illness on the Premises

For the latest information regarding what to do when guests develop Covid-19 or other illnesses on the premises, refer to the latest Public Health Scotland guidance, paragraphs 2.3 – 2.5: COVID-19 information and guidance for workplaces and community settings:

<https://www.publichealthscotland.scot/media/12985/2022-05-06-information-and-guidance-for-workplaces-and-community-settings-version-11.pdf>

2 Further Information & Resources

Further information on COVID-19

You might see various references to Coronavirus, such as SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19. The virus itself is called SARS-CoV-2 and is responsible for causing the COVID-19 disease. COVID-19 is shorthand for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (when the disease was first discovered).

Coronaviruses are part of a family of **enveloped cells**, which means that they're wrapped in a protective layer of lipids (fat) and proteins. SARS-CoV-2 virus is an enveloped virus, and to successfully neutralise the virus, products must be used that are effective on 'enveloped viruses'. SARS-CoV-2 is passed through respiratory secretions and faeces and can live on different surfaces for different lengths of time. When you touch a surface with virus on it, you can transfer that virus to your hand, which in turn may be ingested by you (through touching your face, rubbing your eyes, etc)

Washing your hands with soap, or disinfecting them with hand sanitiser, are effective ways to dissolve the viruses' protective envelope which then exposes and neutralises the virus¹.

More detailed guidance

What products should I be using?

In order to assist in the prevention of the spread of viruses it is important to understand the difference between cleaning and disinfecting. Cleaning is the act of removing dirt and other visible signs of surface fouling, such as grease marks or stains. Disinfecting is when you use specific chemicals to kill viruses or germs (for example when you spray an area with a bleach solution, such as a sink or toilet bowl). It is essential to clean first, and then disinfect.

- **A virucidal disinfectant** is any physical or chemical agent that deactivates or destroys viruses. EN 1276 is a disinfection standard for Bacteria – most specifically MRSA. To be sure of killing viruses you should use a disinfecting agent certified for **EN 14476**.
- Virucidal spray is a very common and cheap method to clean all hard surfaces and high touch points (light switches and door handles) and can easily be implemented by anyone. You just need to check that your spray works on enveloped viruses to be effective against Coronavirus and ensure that it has the appropriate dwell time (leave it to air dry). Some products need diluting so you need to make sure you get the concentrations correct. This method is the best for frequent cleaning and for hard surfaces. It's not so effective on soft furnishings and it also requires you to cover all surfaces manually. Virucidal sprays with EN14675 or EN14476 are tested on similar viruses but haven't yet been tested on SARS-CoV-2. EN14476:2013+A2:2019 are products that have been tested on and found to be effective on SARS-CoV-2. **Look out for products certified as EN 14476.**

¹ <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/>

- **Sodium hypochlorite** is a solid white powder, but is more commonly used dissolved in water. Solutions of **sodium hypochlorite** are commonly referred to as **bleach**, although household **bleach** also contains small amounts of several other compounds, including **sodium hydroxide** and calcium **hypochlorite**. These products can be purchased online. While bleach will eliminate the virus on surfaces it also has other side effects that can have negative impacts on your health. We would advise caution at all times when using bleach and never mix it with any other cleaning products.
- **70% Ethanol** (Anhydrous Alcohol) is an effective cleaning agent that kills microbes, denatures proteins, and dissolves lipids. **Ethanol** is also known as **ethyl alcohol**, alcohol anhydrous, denatured alcohol. This product cannot be shipped to a private residence.

Log Kill Rates

In terms of infection control, the Log Kill Rate means how effective a cleaning product is at reducing bacteria, viruses, or other microorganisms that can be the cause of disease. In microbiology, they use the term colony forming units (CFUs), which is a unit which is used to estimate the number of viable (i.e. living) bacteria or fungal cells in a sample. The following table shows how many CFUs you are left with using different chemical products for the reduction of bacteria. As you can see, the number of bacteria left using a 99.999% product is only 10 as opposed to 1000 with a supermarket product.

Log Kill Rate Chart

CFUs	After use of product killing xx% of bacteria	You are left with	Log Kill Rate
1m	99%	10,000	2-Log
1m	99.9%	1,000	3-Log
1m	99.99%	100	4-Log
1m	99.999%	10	5-Log
1m	99.9999%	1	6-Log

Guide to cleaning different surfaces

According to [National Institutes of Health \(NIH\)](https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/new-coronavirus-stable-hours-surfaces) studies², Coronavirus can live for up to 2-3 days on plastic and stainless steel surfaces. Since these materials make up many of the things which we regularly touch on a day to day basis, such as light switches and taps, it's vital to disinfect surfaces to reduce the possible risk of transmission between people. This is why the [World Health Organisation \(WHO\)](https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-infection-prevention-and-control-for-health-care-workers)³ advises the use of diluted Sodium Hypochlorite (bleach) at 0.5% to regularly disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, kitchen surfaces, and bathroom surfaces. Further studies to help us understand more about how the virus transmits across surfaces are being conducted every day, so it's important to keep up to date and follow the guidance. You can keep up to date through the Centres for Disease Control & Prevention ([CDC](https://www.cdc.gov))⁴ or the [WHO](https://www.who.int).

Adapted from: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) Technical Report: Disinfection of environments in healthcare and non-healthcare settings potentially contaminated with SARS-CoV-2.

(S: Suggested O: Optional)

² <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/new-coronavirus-stable-hours-surfaces>

³ <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-infection-prevention-and-control-for-health-care-workers>

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov>

	Healthcare Setting / RED RISK SCU	Non-Healthcare Setting / AMBER RISK SCU	General Setting / Green Risk SCU
Surfaces – be aware of where the surface is – kitchens need to be safe for food preparation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initially Clean with a general detergent or hot soapy water Then disinfect with a Virucidal disinfectant OR 0.05% sodium hypochlorite OR 70% ethanol [S] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial clean with general detergent or hot soapy water Then disinfect with Virucidal disinfectant OR 0.05% sodium hypochlorite OR 70% ethanol [S] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean with general detergent or hot soapy water. [S]
Toilets & Bathrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virucidal disinfectant OR 0.1% sodium hypochlorite [S] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virucidal disinfectant OR 0.1% sodium hypochlorite [S] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virucidal disinfectant OR 0.1% sodium hypochlorite [O]
Textiles – Linens, towels,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hot-water cycle (90oC) AND Regular laundry detergent Alternative lower temp cycle + bleach or other laundry products [S] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hot-water cycle (60oC) AND Regular laundry detergent Alternative lower temp cycle + bleach or other laundry products [S] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hot-water cycle (60oC) AND Regular laundry detergent Alternative lower temp cycle + bleach or other laundry products [O]
Cleaning Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single-use disposable OR Non-disposable disinfected with: Virucidal disinfectant OR 0.1% sodium hypochlorite [S] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single-use disposable OR Non-disposable disinfected with: Virucidal disinfectant OR 0.1% sodium hypochlorite [O] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single-use disposable OR Non-disposable cleaned at the end of each session [S]
Protective Clothing for Cleaning Staff (NB check chemical being used for level of mask needed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surgical mask Disposable long-sleeved water-resistant gown Gloves FFP2 or 3 when cleaning facilities where AGP have been performed [S] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surgical mask Uniform & plastic apron Gloves [S] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uniform Gloves [S]
Waste Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infectious clinical waste category B (UN3291) [S] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In a separate bag in the unsorted garbage [S] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unsorted waste [S]

Hot Tubs, Pools or Spas

- There is no evidence to suggest that Covid-19 can be passed through water in hot tubs, pools or spas. Proper maintenance and cleaning processes (including disinfection with bromine and chlorine) should deactivate the virus in water. PH levels should be kept at 7, and free chlorine 1.5. However, pools, hot tubs and spas should not be shared between guests staying in other properties.
- However, external touch points need to be handled with protective clothing by maintenance staff and disinfected. Handles, lids and control panels should all be cleaned or disposable protective clothing worn when handling. BISHTA guidelines should be followed⁵.

UK legislation related to health and safety

There is already a great deal of provision made under UK legislation in relation to Health & Safety liabilities:

- The Occupiers Liability Acts 1957 and 1984
- The Management of Health & safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the minimum you must do is:

- Identify what could cause injury or illness in your business (hazards)
- Decide how likely it is that someone could be harmed and how seriously (the risk)
- Take action to eliminate the hazard, or if this isn't possible, control the risk

As an employer, you're required by law to protect your employees, and others, from harm⁶.

Further guidance can be found on the Health and Safety Executive's website⁷.

Further guidance can be found about those at higher risk from COVID-19⁸.

Additional links

PHS guidance for non-healthcare settings: <https://www.publichealthscotland.scot/publications/covid-19-information-and-guidance-for-workplaces-and-community-settings/covid-19-information-and-guidance-for-workplaces-and-community-settings-version-11/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance#guidance-for-the-public>

Best practice: how to hand wash (poster):

<https://www.yas.nhs.uk/media/3142/detailed-handwashing-poster.pdf>

Guidance for employers and businesses on coronavirus (COVID-19):

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

Public Health England: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england>

Public Health Scotland: <https://publichealthscotland.scot>

Public Health Wales: <https://phw.nhs.wales>

Public Health Northern Ireland: <https://www.publichealth.hscni.net>

Cleaning up body fluids: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/oce23.pdf>

⁵ www.bishta.co.uk

⁶ <https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/index.htm>

⁷ www.hse.gov.uk

⁸ <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/whosat-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/>

Appendix

- A1) Risk Assessment Template – See Separate Document**
- A2) Cleaning Check List – See Separate Document**
- A3) Cleaning Protocols, Additional Guidance for Self-Catering Properties FAQ**

Cleaning Protocols and Additional Guidance for Self-Catering Properties

FAQ

Should we follow the cleaning protocols strictly?

The issued Cleaning Protocols are guidance, rather than exact steps that you must take, or indeed law. The most important thing to do is to properly risk assess your business, and update that risk assessment periodically.

Cleaning Products and EN Numbers

I am confused by the EN Numbers, can you provide more information on this?

Be aware of the difference between EN1276 & EN14476

EN 1276 is a disinfectant suitable for Bacteria – most specifically MRSA.

To be sure of neutralising viruses you should use a disinfecting agent certified for EN 14476.

Other disinfectants are effective on the following:

VIRUSES	<i>Poliovirus, Norovirus, Influenza A, adenovirus, Coronavirus (EN 14476)</i>
BACTERIA	<i>MRSA (EN 1276), E.coli (EN 13697), Pseudomonas aeruginosa, Staphylococcus aureus (EN 1276, EN 13697, EN 13727, EN 14561)</i>
BACTERIAL SPORES	<i>Bacillus subtilis, Clostridium difficile (EN 13704)</i>
FUNGI	<i>Aspergillus niger (EN 13624, EN 13687, EN 1650), Candida albicans (EN13624, EN 13697, EN 14562, EN1650)</i>

The are many products on the market now claiming on the labels that they kill coronavirus but on closer inspection on the back the product only has an EN 1276 certification. Below is a simple overview to germicidal standards that you might find useful.

There are numerous multi-EN standard products (including EN 14476) widely available for use both as standard spray-and-wipe disinfectant and also for use in a fogging machine. These fluids are available in either ready-to-use formulations or in concentrated formulations that can be diluted to deliver an extremely economical anti-viral solution.

Do we have to change any of the Cleaning Protocols to deal with New Variants of Covid-19?

The short answer is no: all known variants of Covid are neutralised by the correct use of the cleaning materials covered here. Coronaviruses are part of a family of enveloped cells, which means that they're wrapped in a protective layer of lipids (fat) and proteins. SARS-CoV-2 virus is an enveloped virus, and to successfully neutralise the virus, products must be used that are effective on 'enveloped viruses'.

A virucidal disinfectant is any physical or chemical agent that deactivates or destroys viruses. EN 1276 is a disinfection standard for Bacteria – most specifically MRSA. To be sure of killing viruses you should use a disinfecting agent certified for **EN 14476**.

Should I remove all printed material?

Advice from PHS states that there is very low risk from contact with books etc. as long as cleaning and good hand hygiene is followed.

Green Products – Are there any environmentally friendly products that I can use?

There are some products available in both shops and online that are ecologically friendly, but conform to EN 14476.

Be cautious of claims that products are ecologically friendly. Ensure that the pH is between 10.8 and 11.4 (on the alkaline side of the neutral mid-point) and that it is certified as EN 14476. Un-fragranced products are recommended.

In terms of ecological information, look out for

- *Environmental fate (movement and partitioning): completely miscible in water, non bio-accumulative.*
- *Degradation and Persistence (ecotoxicity): high concentrations in receiving waters have low toxicity to marine organisms, detergent component is readily biodegradable according to appropriate EC legislations.*
- *Data: toxicity in seawater – Naval tov 2.*
- *Why un-fragranced? Some guests could also be allergic to strong smells.*

Cleaning Surfaces, Bedding & Soft-Furnishings

Bedding and Linen – Do I need to change pillow protectors and mattress protectors after each guest?

The important thing is ensuring the integrity of the pillow and mattress and that any protectors can be cleaned & disinfected appropriately and as required with a local risk assessment, using products compatible with pillow/mattress-cover materials to ensure that these covers remain impermeable to fluids.

How do you stop the risk of cross-contamination onto the pillow or mattress whilst stripping them?

When removing the protectors, do it carefully turning them inside out on themselves. With a mattress protector you can take off at all corners and fold in on itself. This is how you would remove the linen too.

Should bedding be washed at 60 degrees?

You can wash the beddings at 40 degrees if:

- *you tumble dry*
- *you iron the sheets*

NB do double check the heat setting for your protectors as you may damage them if too hot in the dryer.

Shared Facilities and Extras

Outside equipment and seating: should I continue to provide outside equipment, seating and other outside facilities?

You may wish to consider cleaning and disinfecting these areas, as you would in business as usual

Can guests use hot tubs and pools?

There is no evidence to suggest that Covid-19 or other viruses can be passed through water in hot tubs, pools or spas. Proper maintenance and cleaning processes (including disinfection with bromine and chlorine) should deactivate the virus in water. PH levels should be kept at 7, and free chlorine 1.5. However, hot tubs and spas should not be shared between guests staying in other properties.

It is best practice to enable social distancing through implementing pool rotas where possible, as pool over-crowding should be avoided. Access to pools will need to be thought through, and if there are gates then hand sanitisers should be provided. Pool changing rooms and toilets are allowed to be opened if you can maintain social distancing in them and maintain a cleaning regime.

Guides, Maps, Books & Games: should I continue to provide guests with useful resources to use whilst on holiday?

There is significant added value to a guests stay where 'extra touches' are provided. Advice from PHS states that there is very low risk from contact with books etc. as long as cleaning and good hand hygiene is followed.

Welcome baskets: should I continue to provide a welcome basket?

Welcoming guests is a very important part of the guest experience. If you wish to continue to offer local produce to guests during their stay you may wish to consider only offering produce which is sealed or packaged. You may also wish to consider how you are presenting the produce.

Where can I find out more?

If you are not already a member of your relevant body, please do consider joining. These include:

- *Association of Scotland's Self Caterers (ASSC)⁹ provide advice, lobbying and leadership for self-catering operators in Scotland and beyond.*
- *Professional Association of Self-Caterers (PASC UK) lobbies and supports self-caterers across the UK¹⁰.*

⁹ <https://www.assc.co.uk/>

¹⁰ <https://www.pascuk.co.uk/>

Disclaimer

The original guidance was developed in partnership by the Association of Scotland's Self-Caterers, the Professional Association of Self-Caterers, and the Wales Tourism Alliance. It is supported by the Tourism Alliance, the Scottish Tourism Alliance and the Wales Association of Self-Catering Operators.

This document was reviewed by Public Health Scotland (PHS) and Infection Protection Control (IPC) in May 2022. It remains valid until we are advised to the contrary.

It is worth noting that other viruses are harder to neutralise than Covid-19 (eg norovirus), so it is best practice to remain vigilant.

The issued Cleaning Protocols are guidance, rather than exact steps that you must take, or indeed law. The most important thing to do is to properly risk assess your business, and update that risk assessment periodically.

The content is based on guidance from the HSE (Health and Safety Executive), WHO (World Health Organisation), European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), Global Biorisk Advisory Council (GBAC), and Centres for Disease Control (CDC), NIH (National Institutes of Health), NHS (National Health Service). These agencies do not endorse this content. This is guidance only, and we make no representations or warranties of any kind, express or implied, about the completeness, accuracy, reliability, suitability, or availability with respect to this content provided for any purpose. Any reliance you place on such information is therefore strictly at your own risk.