

Cleaning Protocols and Additional Guidance for Self-Catering Properties and Short-Term Lets in the Context of Covid-19

FAQ's

6 April 2021



PREMIER COTTAGES

PLEASE NOTE, Version Updates:

- **We will periodically be issuing updates.**
- **These updates will be posted on our website.**
- **Please ensure you check regularly to ensure you are up to date with the current version of the cleaning protocols and associated documents.**

Can we have a printable word version of the cleaning protocols?

Yes, there is a Word version of both the Risk Assessment and Cleaning Check List on the PASC UK Website. <https://www.pascuk.co.uk/standards>

What is the priority?

The most important thing to do is to properly 'risk assess' your business using the Cleaning Protocols and document this in a Risk Assessment, that you periodically update.

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.

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 killed by the correct use of the Cleaning materials covered in the Self-Catering Cleaning Protocols. 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**.

Do I need to get the Guests Contact Details?

QR CODES

This is law in England for Self-Catering from September 2020, 'please use' in Wales from September 2020. It is not currently a requirement in Scotland.

<https://faq.covid19.nhs.uk/article/KA-01183/en-us>

You can download the QR Codes easily here <https://www.gov.uk/create-coronavirus-qr-poster> It takes two minutes. You fill in some basic details, they send you a verification code, you then tick the accommodation box, no it doesn't say self-catering, but it does apply, so tick the accommodation box and complete. You will get the Code back shortly afterwards and can print off and display somewhere visitors can see it and ask customers to scan it when they arrive, using the NHS COVID-19 app.

Q and A.

- If you have sixteen holiday cottages on one postcode, one QR Code can be downloaded and displayed in each cottage. If you have properties on different postcodes, then each will need an individual QR Code. However, you might want to do one for each cottage if how several cottages on one site. If a customer is track and traced, they would only then contact the customers who had stayed in a single cottage, rather than every customer you had in all your properties at that time.
- You can laminate the QR Codes when you print them off.
- If you do not have signal in the cottage, scanning the code will still work as the app on the guests phone will store the data until a connection is made, when it will be sent to the NHS.
- The guests need to download an app to work with the QR Code. They can get it here <https://www.covid19.nhs.uk> They will need this to go to restaurants and pubs too.

What needs to be recorded?

- The name of the customer or visitor. If there is more than one person, then you can record the name of the 'lead member' of the group and the number of people in the group.
- A contact phone number for each customer or visitor, or for the lead member of a group of people.
- Date of visit, arrival time and, where possible, departure time.
- If customers scan the QR Code, you do not have to collect the information specified above.
- Visitors to accommodation businesses need to scan the QR code every day that they are there because the system resets at midnight each night removing customers details.

However, we will have no idea if the guests will be using this so best practice would be to continue to use your bookings system to maintain these requirements as we are legally obliged to keep this information for at least 21 days. You can keep a paper record.

Recording Staff on site

You must keep clear records of staff onsite, a slight modification of the wages book would probably be sufficient. This should include:

- The names of staff who work at the premises.
- A contact phone number for each member of staff.
- The dates and times that staff are at work.
- If a customer will interact with only one member of staff (e.g: a hairdresser), the name of the assigned staff member should be recorded alongside the name of the customer.

Exemptions:

You do not need to ask for contact details or check scanning of the NHS QR code if the person visiting:

- Is a police officer or emergency responder on duty.
- Is making a delivery or collection by suppliers or contractors, including food or physical goods.
- Is under the age of 16.

England

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/maintaining-records-of-staff-customers-and-visitors-to-support-nhs-test-and-trace>

Wales

<https://gov.wales/keeping-records-staff-customers-and-visitors-test-trace-protect>

*In **Scotland**, guidance regarding Test and Protect data collection only applies to hospitality businesses, and as such will not apply to accommodation providers, unless there are restaurants / pubs and other services involved.*

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-tourism-and-hospitality-sector-guidance/pages/collecting-customer-contact-details/>

Suspected Covid-19 cases: What do I do if a staff member or guest develops or arrives with Covid-19 symptoms?

In England and Wales:

What to do if you or a staff member develops COVID-19 symptoms

The following rules should be adhered to:

- 1. If you, or a staff-member, display symptoms of Coronavirus or live in a household where someone else has symptoms, that person must not enter the rental property. COVID-19 Government guidance for the public states: “the most common symptoms of coronavirus are recent onset of a continuous cough or high temperature or a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell”. If you or your staff have these symptoms then stay at home for 7 days, or 14 days if living with someone who has the symptoms. There is no need to call NHS 111 to go into self-isolation. If symptoms worsen during self-isolation or are no better after 7 days contact NHS 111 online, or if there is no internet, call NHS 111.*
- 2. In order for you or a staff member to return to work, you will need to carry out a return to work assessment, to ensure the individual’s recovery is clear and they are able to return to work, again this includes yourself. You will need to find out whether staff have any pre-existing conditions or are living with people who are at risk or are vulnerable. All communications with staff should be undertaken electronically. Support should be offered to all staff suffering from mental health problems and be advised to contact www.mind.org.uk or www.anxietyuk.org.uk*
- 3. If you, your cleaner or a member of staff develop symptoms at work they must be sent home and follow Government “stay at home” guidance. If there is an emergency dial 999. Disinfect any touch points that may have been infected by a contaminated person.*
- 4. Subject to getting a clear Covid test the Member of staff can return to work.*

What to do if a Guest contracts Covid-19 whilst on Holiday.

The government has updated the FAQ public guidance on what people need to do if someone contracts Coronavirus while on Holiday in England.

- inform the accommodation provider immediately*
- immediately self-isolate and request a test by calling 119 or online at nhs.uk.*
- return home as quickly and directly as possible if the test is positive*
- use private transport to return home but only driving if they can do so safely.*

- *If they cannot avoid using public transport, they should continue to self-isolate in the accommodation and call 111 for further advice.*
- *If self-isolating in the accommodation necessitates extending their stay in the accommodation, they can only do this if it is agreed with the accommodation provider*
- *The customer will be expected to pay the costs of an extended stay in all but exceptional circumstances.*

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/hotels-and-other-guest-accommodation#section-5-2>

There is also a useful NHS poster, with the critical words on it that say, if the guests stay, they pay.

This can be downloaded from <https://www.pascuk.co.uk/covid-19>

What you need to do if you fall ill with COVID-19 symptoms whilst visiting

If you develop COVID-19 symptoms during your visit, do not ignore or try to hide your symptoms. It is important you act quickly to help yourself and protect those around you. It is your responsibility to stay safe and keep others safe.

If you feel unwell and experience any COVID-19 symptoms you must:

- Stay indoors and self-isolate
- Arrange a test using your holiday address

Do not ignore your symptoms: self-isolating and getting tested quickly is the best way that you can stay safe and protect others.

You **MUST** notify your accommodation provider.

If you need medical advice while you wait for your test results please contact your regular (home) GP or call 111.

If you are staying or travelling with others, they must also self-isolate and take appropriate action based on your test result.

COVID-19 symptoms are:

- A new, continuous cough
- High temperature
- A loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

How do I book a test?

- Online: www.nhs.uk/coronavirus
- Call: 119

Please use the address of your holiday destination:

INSERT HERE

Test results are issued by text or email so you do not need to wait for your results if you are due to return home before your result may arrive. You must return home the most direct way and do not use public transport.

What should I do if my test is positive?

If you feel well enough to travel and do not need to use public transport, you should return home as quickly and directly as you can

If you feel so unwell that you cannot travel or cannot avoid public transport, you should continue to isolate and call 111 for further advice

It is important that you do not use public transport. You must also tell your accommodation provider that you have tested positive.

If you are unwell and cannot return home, you will be expected to pay all costs to your accommodation provider.


My test was negative, can I stay?

Stay and enjoy your visit as planned but if you need medical assistance please call your own regular GP or 111.

Who to contact if you're unwell?

- If you are ill and need medical advice, call 111 or your own GP
- In the event of a medical emergency, call 999

Produced in partnership with the COVID-19 Health Protection Boards of Devon & Torbay, Cornwall & Isles of Scilly, Dorset, Somerset and Plymouth



Further advice on COVID-19: NHS: nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19
UK Government: gov.uk/coronavirus

Approaches to Cleaning

Should we disinfect on arrival at the property before doing anything?

There is no definite right or wrong answer, it's your choice of how you want to reduce the risk to you.

Some will 'pre-disinfect', although this is not necessary unless you know someone has been ill on the premises. Some will wear gloves, and some will wash hands.

What should I wear when I go to the property? Should I wear a visor?

When you arrive at the property after your guests have left, you should wear your protective clothing to stop you getting the virus.

When doing the clean you should wash your hands regularly, especially when taking on and off your gloves. By washing your hands, you will stop the chain of infection and stop yourself from getting the virus.

Should I wear a visor?

Visors are to stop direct respiratory droplets, they won't make any difference when vacuuming or changing beds, but you might want to wear one if you are meeting a guest at the property.

Respiratory face masks – Do I or my cleaners need to wear face masks?

Recommendations to wear protective clothing are noted within the cleaning protocols.

Recommendations are generally to 'consider' your approach to protective clothing. The findings from your individual risk assessments will be proportionate to your own business and should highlight the choices you wish to make to mitigate certain risks identified.

Please note with regards to face masks: *Due to increased demand, and profits linked to face masks, there are increasing numbers of sub-standard masks widely available for sale. Ensure that you only purchase masks from a reputable supplier and that they come with a genuine CE marking.*

Do I need to leave 72 hours between bookings?

There is no requirement for a gap between bookings, if you do a robust 2-part clean:

- 1) Clean*
- 2) Disinfect*

Cleaning Products and EN Numbers

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

The following information will be added to Version 2 of the Cleaning Protocols Document:

Be aware of the difference between EN1276 & EN14476

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**.*

VIRUSES

Poliovirus, Norovirus, Influenza A, adenovirus (EN 14476)

BACTERIA	<i>MRSA (EN 1276), E.coli (EN 13697), Pseudomonas aeruginosa, Stapylococcus 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), Cabdida 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.

Fortunately, there are several 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.

How long does it live on different surfaces?

Latest evidence published in The Lancet and The New England Journal of Medicine illustrates that information and knowledge is evolving all the time. Currently it is thought that the virus can live on some common household surfaces for:

<i>Surface Type</i>	<i>Present</i>	<i>No Longer Present</i>
<i>Air</i>	<i>2-3 hours</i>	
<i>Paper and tissue</i>	<i>30 minutes</i>	<i>3 hours</i>
<i>Copper</i>	<i>4 hours</i>	<i>8 hours</i>
<i>Wood, cloth and cardboard</i>	<i>1 day</i>	<i>2 days</i>
<i>Glass</i>	<i>2 days</i>	<i>4 days</i>
<i>Plastic and stainless steel</i>	<i>4 days</i>	<i>7 days</i>

**This is based on testing initially, then at 4 days and then 7 days, when the virus was entirely neutralised.*

Should I use a fogging machine?

Ultra -Low Volume (ULV) Fogging is a delivery system for sanitising, with the use of machines that push out disinfectant in a fine mist to cover all surfaces. Because the mist is pushed out under pressure the disinfectant spreads across a wide area and can get into hard to reach areas. Fogging takes place after cleaning. It does not preclude the need to clean first. Operators must wear full protective clothing (mask, goggles and gloves) and be well trained on both the equipment and the chemicals they are using. EN 14476 compliant chemicals should be used. EN14476 is the European standard for virucidal efficacy, and it is clearly labelled on any compliant disinfectant product. The disinfectant fluids used in a ULV fogger are no different to the brands that you would buy for use in a pump spray bottle.

A key advantage to ULV fogging is that the room is safe to be reopened after 30 minutes. Ventilation is always a positive method to remove any airborne virus, although evidence suggests that the virus does not remain airborne for long. Ventilation is not required, however, after using a fogger. Fogging with a suitable disinfecting fluid will destroy a virus within 5 minutes. The fine fog lands on all surfaces and condenses. On glass, this may appear to leave a 'smear'. This can be wiped off with a microfibre cloth after 15 minutes. Curtains and soft furnishings should be fogged from a distance, to avoid over saturating it. When used correctly, material should be dry within 6-7 minutes. It may be advisable to do a spot test on some materials.

It is important to recognise that ULV fogging is different to thermal fogging, where the particles are much finer and can remain suspended in the air for longer. ULV foggers produce a droplet size of minimum 20 microns that does not hang in the air as it is too heavy, therefore presents a much lower respiratory risk than thermal foggers, which do spray a true fog with particle size as low as 0.5 microns.

It is not mandatory to use a fogger. Thermal Fogging is not recommended.

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

We are currently researching bleach and chemical free products. We will provide more information when we have it.

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?

There is no official guidance on this as yet: however, you might consider changing pillow protectors as well as pillow slips, as pillow covers aren't Hepa Filters. You may consider changing duvet protectors and mattress protectors between guests. Alternatively, you might either wish to wash pillows (rotating stock) or spray the actual pillow / mattress / duvet with disinfectant spray (certified as EN 14476).

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 if the guests had not done it already for you.

Should bedding be washed at 60 degrees?

You can wash the beddings at 40 degrees if:

- *you are not using it straight away*
- *you tumble dry*
- *you iron you are going to get temp up anyway*

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

Soft Furnishings: how do I clean and disinfect soft furnishings between guests?

You might wish to consider a disinfectant spray (certified as EN 14476) on soft furnishings, mattresses and in particular high touch point areas (where do you draw the curtains?). Fogging would effectively treat soft furnishings (assuming the fogging liquid being used was a suitable virucide). Not all disinfectant sprays will have been tested for use on Covid-19 so we would suggest speaking with your supplier. You may wish to consider using a carpet cleaner/steam cleaner on carpets and soft furnishings, but these may only be required in the instance of an infection

Polished Wood & Porcelain: how do I clean and disinfect more delicate surfaces between guests?

We would suggest avoiding anything like peroxide or bleach (as you are never sure of the concentrations). However, you may wish to consider using a plain (non-smell) Quaternary compound (possibly pH neutral), but if you are really worried about the finish, soap and water (as usual) should be adequate. We have been advised that a product containing 70% alcohol may dull a wood varnish, but we do not have evidence of this at this point.

What can I use on leather sofas?

Check the product that you are using. Anything that is Hypochlorous acid based is fine for all surfaces, but if in doubt ask the manufacturer and check it in a discreet place first. Most products will be suitable (except bleach), as all have been developed for mass fogging / misting.

Porous Surfaces: how do I clean and disinfect more delicate surfaces between guests?

We would suggest that surfaces such as Granite you continue to clean as you would normally. You may wish to consider avoiding everything except soap and water and 70% alcohol (if the granite is not polished completely, however, expect the soap to get ingrained after a while) We have been advised that bleach, ammonia, peroxide are likely to affect / dull it and lot of commercial disinfectants will have citrus and other mild acids so best avoided. Again we do not have evidence of this at this point.

Shared Facilities and Extras

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

It is recognised that the virus does not survive long outdoors, however you should consider key touch points if guests are using outside equipment or facilities such as BBQs, gates and seating. You may wish to consider cleaning and disinfecting these areas.

Can guests share facilities?

In the absence of explicit guidelines from Government, each property will need to do a risk assessment for their particular circumstances. For example, if you have a shared outdoor pool, and (say) three or four cottages, it may be practicable to have a rota so that each cottage can use it privately in turn, and social distancing can be maintained, and you may want to close changing/toilet facilities. If you have a shared outdoor pool with 30 cottages, this may not be a practicable solution. Toddler ball pools are likely to be impossible to sanitise, so it would not be recommended to open these. Games room equipment can be taken outside, etc. Every situation will be different and you will need to make an appropriate judgement.

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. Evidence suggest that the virus does not survive long on paper. However, you may wish to consider either a rotation of items, where items are bagged/boxed, taken away and stored securely for 72 hours or whether any items can be wiped, cleaned and disinfected at changeover. Be clear to explain this to guests so they don't just think you haven't bothered taking out risky items. Alternatively, you could half the collections, then take half out, and each turnaround you swap what's there.

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, i.e. whether you use a wipeable, disposable or single use, container or simply leave the produce as stand-alone items. Any welcome notes or information should be either single use or wipeable.

Where can I find out more?

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

- ASSC <https://www.assc.co.uk/> Association of Scotland's Self Caterers: provide advice, lobbying and leadership for self-catering operators in Scotland and beyond.
- PASC <https://www.pascuk.co.uk/> Professional Association of Self-Caterers: lobbies and supports self-caterers across the UK.
- DCBN <https://dcbn.org.uk/> Domestic Cleaning Business Network: a useful network for cleaning professionals across the UK.

This guidance was originally developed in partnership by the ASSC (Association of Scotland's Self-Caterers), PASC UK (Professional Association of Self-Caterers UK) and Premier Cottages. It is supported by the Tourism Alliance, Wales Tourism Alliance and the Wales Association of Self-Catering Operators. This version has been updated by PASC UK and Premier Cottages Ltd.

Disclaimer

This 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.