

# Guidance for Environmental Cleaning in Tourism and Travel facilities in context of COVID-19 pandemic

*Joint Interim Guidance; Department of Tourism and Department of Health; 4 May 2020.*

The guidance aims to ensure the implementation of adequate environmental cleaning and disinfection in tourism and travel facility.

COVID-19 is spread principally by droplets and through contaminated hands and surfaces. Key individual level measures to take include good hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and avoiding touching the face. Evidence to-date suggests the virus can survive on various surfaces for hours to days, and as such, environmental cleaning is a key effective intervention to prevent spread of COVID-19 in all settings, including tourism and travel.

## Scope

These guidelines are relevant for full- or part-time cleaning managers and/or cleaning supervisors, or other staff who assure a clean environment, such as supervisors of hotels or departments, procurement staff, facilities management, and any others responsible for WASH and/cleaning services and/or health and safety officer at the tourism and travel facility.

## Prerequisites

Mops; Mop buckets (designated for different areas e.g.: toilet/kitchen/general floor); Vacuum for carpet; Appropriate disinfectants; Measuring jug; Cloths for damp dusting (designated for different areas e.g.: toilets, kitchen, office or frequently touched surfaces); Dust pans and brushes; Disposable gloves; Disposable mask; Disposable Plastic aprons; Eye protection or mask (if cases where evidence of splash or aerosol is anticipated); Biohazard disposable waste bag and bin liners (colour coded bags. E.g. yellow or white for biohazard waste and black for general waste).

## Terminology

In this document, cleaning refers to wiping or washing an object or surface, to reduce number of germs, dirt and impurities on the surface, whereas disinfection refers to measures to kill germs on surfaces being cleaned.

## Choice

For Cleaning and disinfection, it is suggest that one of the following be used:

- Diluted sodium hypochlorite (house-hold bleach) solution, at a concentration of 1% (1000ppm).
- Alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol content (where bleach cannot be used).

Note: most industrial and household cleaning products are bactericidal and viricidal.

## Principles

Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect all areas (e.g., offices, bathrooms, rooms and common areas) used by the staffs and clients, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces

Frequently touch surfaces include Tables, Light switches, Countertops, Lifts, Railings, Door knobs, Handles, Taps, Phone headsets, Keyboards/Mouse, Desk surfaces Toilets, Sinks, Armrests, Railings, chairs, TV remotes, key cards, keys, vending machines.

## Procedures

- All cleaning staffs should be trained on appropriate use of cleaning and disinfection chemicals.
- Wear disposable gloves and disposable aprons for all tasks in the cleaning process, including handling of trash.
- Additional personal protective equipment (PPE), e.g. mask and face shield, might be required based on the cleaning/disinfectant products used and whether there is a risk of splash.
- All rooms should be cleaned and disinfected with 0.5% to 1% concentration of diluted household bleach solution at least once a day and for each client before check in and after check-out
- Bathrooms and toilets should be cleaned and disinfected with 0.5% to 1% concentration of diluted household bleach solution, at least once daily in hotel rooms (used only by occupying clients) and twice daily in communal areas (e.g. hotel receptions, travel offices).
- All offices, floors and other areas should be cleaned and disinfected with at least 0.5% to 1% concentration of diluted household bleach solution at least once per day.
- Surfaces should be cleaned with detergent first and then mopped/rinsed with clean water after at least 10 minutes contact time with disinfectant.
- When use of bleach is not suitable (e.g. telephone, remote control equipment, door handlings, buttons in the elevator, etc.), use alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol or disinfecting wipes.
- For electronics, please follow manufacturer's instructions on how to clean them.
- Practice routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces at least four times a day.
- More frequent cleaning and disinfection may be required in certain areas if their level of use is very high.
- Create a cleaning schedule and monitoring checklist.
- Whenever possible, use disposable cleaning materials.
- Prior to reusing (e.g. cloth, mops), for other rooms/areas, disinfect properly with 0.5% sodium hypochlorite solution, or according to manufacturer's instructions
- Gloves, apron and/or gowns should be removed carefully and disposed in closed bins, to avoid contamination of the wearer and the surrounding area.
- Always wash hands immediately with soap and water for 20 seconds after removing gloves or any additional PPE after each cleaning process and after contact with anyone who is well or sick.
- Hand sanitizer: If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 70% alcohol may be used. However, if hands are visibly dirty, always wash hands with soap and water.
- All waste containers/bins should be pedal operated and covered.
- All wastes should be tied or sealed in a plastic bag, double-bagged and then disposed in a sanitary fashion.

- Ensure the proper functioning and availability of soap and disinfectant solution dispensers, hand dryers, disposable tissue dispensers, and other similar devices. Defective units should be rapidly repaired or replaced.

## Dilution of household bleach for use

Dilution varies based on the strength of the commercial product being used. The active ingredient in bleach is sodium hypochlorite, and its strength is stated in percentages (e.g. 5%) or parts per million (e.g. 5000ppm).

Concentration required to kill COVID-19 and other bacterial or viruses is between 500 to 1000 ppm (0.5% -1%). Therefore, a typical household bleach product of 5% strength will require dilution with 10 parts water, to give a 0.5% solution of bleach for environmental cleaning.

$$\text{Parts of water to add} = (\text{Concentration of Commercial Bleach in \%}) \times 2 - 1$$

E.g. 1 cup/part of commercial bleach at 7% strength will require  $7 \div 0.5 - 1 = 13$  cups/part of water added to it, to make a concentration of 0.5% (500 ppm), for environmental cleaning use.

(NB: The calculation provided above would change depending on the percentage of the bleach available within the workplace)

## Direction for cleaning

- Clean, then disinfect, from the least soiled areas (cleanest) to the most soiled areas (dirtiest) so that dirtiest areas are cleaned last;
- Clean, then disinfect, from higher levels to lower levels so that debris may fall on the floor and is cleaned last;

## Cleaning of Electronics

For electronics, such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls, and ATM machines

- Consider putting a **wipeable cover** on electronics.
- Follow manufacturer's instruction for cleaning and disinfecting.
- If no guidance, use alcohol-based wipes or sprays containing at least 60% alcohol. Dry surface thoroughly.

## Soft surfaces

For soft surfaces such as carpeted floor, rugs, and drapes:

- **Clean the surface using soap and water** or with cleaners appropriate for use on these surfaces.
- **Launder items** (if possible) according to the manufacturer's instructions. Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.
- Use steam cleaning for items that cannot be laundered e.g. upholstered furniture/mattresses.
- Heavily contaminated items that cannot be cleaned should be disposed immediately as an infectious waste.

## Dishes and cutlery

- Dishes and cutlery should be cleaned in a commercial or domestic dishwasher using appropriate dishwasher detergent.
- Reusable dishes and cutlery must be cleaned using hot water and appropriate dishwashing detergent.
- Ensure all items are thoroughly cleaned.
- Clean and dry all dishes and cutlery and store in a cupboard or keep covered to prevent potential contamination from sneezes or coughs.
- Wash hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer for at least 20 seconds prior to handling dishes and cutlery
- Any unused dishes and cutlery touched by guests or staff should be washed prior to reusing.
- When manual washing is required all dishes and cutleries should be washed, disinfected, rinsed, and dried out with disposable paper towels.

## Laundry

For clothing, towels, linens, napkins, table cloths and other items

- Launder items according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Wash in hot cycles of (70°C or more or maximum allowed based on type) with the usual detergents and dry items completely.
- **Wear disposable gloves, apron** when handling dirty laundry.
- Dirty laundry from a person who is sick can be washed with other people's items.
- **Do not shake** dirty laundry.
- Clean and **disinfect cloth hangers** according to guidance above for surfaces.
- Remove gloves after doing laundry, dispose in covered bin, and wash hands thoroughly.

## Rooms of ill staff or clients

Report ill clients to supervisors. Get them to seek medical advice by phone.

It is recommended to **close off areas used by the ill persons and wait as long as practical before beginning cleaning and disinfection** to minimize potential for exposure to respiratory droplets.

**Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.** If possible, wait up to 24 hours before beginning cleaning and disinfection.

- Wear disposable gloves, apron and mask when cleaning the ill person's room.
- Clean and disinfect with 1% concentration of diluted house-hold bleach solution or alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol.
- Clean at least once daily, and include all frequently touched surfaces.
- Remove all waste and soiled linen and place them in a separate bin liner and label accordingly. Use disposable masks, aprons and gloves when handling these again (e.g. for laundry).
- Waste from this room should be double bagged labelled and discarded accordingly as these are considered infectious and it.
- The same cleaning process applies to rooms of ill persons who are under isolation precautions
- Clean all reusable cleaning equipment, and disinfect with bleach or at least 70% alcohol, before reuse with other clients.

In areas where ill clients have frequented, continue routine cleaning and disinfection.

**N.B.:** Avoid large-surface cleaning methods that produce mists or aerosols, or disperse dust, when cleaning a *sick client's* room, e.g. dry sweeping, mopping, spraying or dusting.

## References

Seychelles IPC guidelines and policies 2014;

<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331638/WHO-2019-nCoV-Hotels-2020.1-eng.pdf>

*CDC website.* <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html>