

Berwickshire Village halls

Guidance on Cleaning Your Hall

Introduction

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is spread through close contact with respiratory droplets produced by an infected person. This includes indirect hand-to-mouth spread when someone touches a surface that has been contaminated with droplets from an infected person. As such, both good personal hygiene, and a good cleaning regime for your hall can help to reduce the risk of infection (alongside two-metre physical distancing).

The virus will die outside of the body after a period of time. Although this can vary from surface to surface, the amount of infectious virus on a surface is significantly reduced after 72 hours.

It is important to remember that the measures taken to clean your hall to prevent the spread of COVID-19 should form part of your COVID-19 risk assessment.

Suitable cleaning materials

For everyday use, a regular disinfectant or detergent that is effective against viruses will be suitable. For example, a disinfectant containing sodium hypochlorite (e.g. bleach) will kill the virus. Similarly, washing surfaces or items with suitable household detergents will be effective. There is an agreed standard for effective products (certified as EN 14476), but others still to be tested may also work.

For personal hygiene, liquid soap and water is considered the best option. Hand sanitiser, containing 70% alcohol, should also be made available at entrances and exits etc.

What should be cleaned?

Anything that is frequently touched, especially if it's touched by lots of people, will need regular cleaning. Examples of frequently touched objects might include:

- doors, and door handles
- light switches
- handrails
- tables and chairs

- windows, window handles and blinds
- common areas like toilets, reception, and corridors

More periodically touched surfaces, perhaps after certain activities, might include:

- floors (especially after yoga and sports activities)
- sports and drama equipment
- TV remote controls
- work surfaces like desks, platforms and workstations
- vending machines, dispensers and water coolers
- control panels for lighting rigs
- computer keyboards, printers, touch screens, monitors and phones
- taps, kettles, water heaters, fridges, microwaves and cupboards
- radiators or radiator covers

How often should surfaces be cleaned?

Health Protection Scotland advises that frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned at least twice daily. This may need to be increased where different groups are using the hall at different times throughout the day. In such cases it is appropriate to clean frequently touched surfaces after each event or activity.

What about soft furnishings?

Items like curtains can be more difficult to clean, particularly if they are very large. A hand-held disinfectant spray can be used on small areas. But if curtains are in frequent use, then it might be better to attach some poles or handles to them so that people touch these (easier-to-clean-items) rather than the fabric itself. However, if the curtains can be removed then this negates the need for cleaning altogether.

For soft furnishings that can be laundered, please see below.

For carpets, upholstery and other fabrics, a hand-held disinfectant spray can be used on small areas. For larger areas use a steam cleaner or carpet shampoo machine. Again, if items can be removed then cleaning will not be needed.

What about laundry?

Linen, towels and other items for laundry should be washed according to the manufacturers' instructions. No additional washing requirements are usually necessary, but the hottest suitable wash is advised. If in doubt, isolate the items securely for 72 hours before washing.

Cleaning kitchens

The application of good hygiene when preparing food and drink is nothing new; and this should be maintained. Indeed, effective and regular cleaning of food preparation and storage surfaces should continue while kitchen areas are in use. Disinfectant sprays and disposable wipes should be available for anyone preparing food and drink.

All kitchen users should practice good personal hygiene, washing their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water before handling food; and at regular intervals. Disposable gloves can be used, a fresh pair being required between food and non-food tasks.

All frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned before the facility is re-used by another group.

Crockery and cutlery should be cleaned with warm water, or in a dishwasher, using general purpose detergent; and dried thoroughly before being stored for re-use. As an alternative, you could ask hall users to bring disposable paper cups and plates and their own cooking utensils.

Alternatively, temporarily closing your kitchen during the pandemic removes the need for any of the above.

Toilet cleanliness and hygiene

You should not assume that pre-COVID-19 cleaning measures will be sufficient. The Scottish Government's guidance is set out in [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): opening public and customer toilets](#).

- Increase your cleaning frequency
- Use a disinfectant rather than detergent
- Pay extra attention to frequently touched areas
- Deploy and display an enhanced cleaning rota
- Reusable equipment should be replaced with disposable (i.e. replace fabric towels with paper ones)

- Cleaning materials should be available for customers to wipe down surfaces (e.g. if you have a baby change area)
- Ensure liquid soap, paper towels etc. are well-stocked; and that facilities are in working order.
- Apply physical distancing measures (one-way systems, capacity limits, physical barriers etc)
- Raise awareness of good hand hygiene by displaying posters.

What else can we do?

A good cleaning regime should be in-use alongside physical distancing and good personal hygiene.

The precise measures you take will follow from your COVID-19 risk assessment. This can include other steps to reduce the regular touching of surfaces, such as wedging open doors to avoid the need to touch them (but not fire doors); and using just one or two people for certain tasks (e.g. opening windows), to reduce the numbers touching a particular surface.

Decontamination following a suspected or known COVID-19 case

For decontamination when a person with symptoms or known to be infected has left the hall, then you can still use regular disinfectants and detergents. Unless the person has spent only minimal time in the hall, the immediate area occupied by the individual should be cleaned, including high-contact areas such as door handles. All cloths, wipes and mop heads used must be disposed of securely within disposable bags. These should then be stored for 72 hours before being put out for waste collection.

Additionally, if there is visible contamination of the area with body fluids, then those undertaking the cleaning should consider wearing a disposable apron and disposable gloves.

What about fogging or UV cleaning methods?

The global pandemic has led to increased interest in fogging machines and UV cleaning methods.

Fogging sends a fine mist of disinfectant which lands on both hard and soft surfaces. It can effectively treat large areas very quickly if the fogging liquid being used is a suitable virucide. However, evidence from the US has raised concerns about their safety; and the Health and Safety Executive warns that the chemicals used can reach harmful levels when used; and

that too high a concentration can leave a residue. As such, the use of such chemicals should be properly assessed under the COSHH Regulations.

UV decontamination is more likely to be used in a health care setting. It does not use any chemicals or leave a residue, but can cause eye or skin damage if directed towards people. Small rooms may not be suitable for UV treatment as there is a minimum distance that the machine must be from the surface. Also, there can be problems with shadowing, meaning that with certain room configurations, the UV does not reach every part of the surface.

So should a village hall use either of these deep cleaning methods?

For the most difficult to clean surfaces, perhaps easier options would be isolate the surface for at least 72 hours, or remove it from use altogether. If however you believe a deep clean with a fogging machine is necessary, you might wish to engage a specialist contractor who should have properly trained staff to carry out the work.

Further information

Health and safety Executive (HSE) [Cleaning your workplace to reduce risk from coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

Scottish Borders Council [Guidance for Cleaning](#)

Public Health Scotland [Core COVID-19 Information and Guidance for General \(Non-Healthcare\) Settings](#)

HSE [Disinfecting premises using fog, mist, vapour or ultraviolet \(UV\) systems during the coronavirus outbreak](#)