# Cleaning and disinfecting after a confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) case

## GUIDE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES

## Introduction

This advice has been developed by the Department of Health and Human Services.

This guide aims to provide advice on cleaning and disinfecting when a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) has been identified in a Victorian childcare centre.

Childcare centres should already have in place written procedures and schedules relating to health and hygiene in line with [Staying Healthy: Preventing diseases in early childhood and care services](https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-preventing-infectious-diseases-early-childhood-education-and-care-services) <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-preventing-infectious-diseases-early-childhood-education-and-care-services>. These procedures should cover the following:

* cleaning of the physical space, toys and other equipment
* hygienic nappy and toileting procedures
* hand hygiene practices.

Disinfectants should be available as a supplement to cleaning in the setting of an outbreak of infection.

## How coronavirus (COVID-19) is transmitted

Coronavirus (COVID-19) spreads through close contact with an infected person and is typically transmitted via respiratory droplets (produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes).

It may also be possible for a person to acquire the disease by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose or eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way that the virus is spreading in this pandemic.

## Cleaning and disinfection

**Cleaning** means physically removing germs, dirt and organic matter from surfaces. Cleaning alone does not kill germs, but by reducing the numbers of germs on surfaces, cleaning helps to reduce the risk of spreading infection.

**Disinfection** means using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing germs that remain on surfaces after cleaning, disinfection further reduces the risk of spreading infection. Cleaning before disinfection is very important as organic matter and dirt can reduce the ability of disinfectants to kill germs.

## Recommended cleaning and disinfection products

### Cleaning with a chlorine-based product (three-step-clean)

Cleaning of surfaces must be undertaken first with a neutral detergent and water prior to disinfection of surfaces.

Disinfection with a chlorine-based product following the manufacturer’s instructions or made using the chlorine dilutions calculator (see Table 1) to achieve a 1000ppm dilution should be used. Note that pre-diluted bleach solutions lose potency over time and on exposure to sunlight, and as such need to be made up fresh daily.

Household bleach comes in a variety of strengths. The concentration of active ingredient – hypochlorous acid – can be found on the product label.

If using a cleaning and disinfection process, after cleaning surfaces with a neutral detergent, apply the bleach solution using disposable paper towels or a disposable cloth. Ensure surfaces remain wet for the specified contact time. Wipe the disinfectant off surfaces to prevent damage.

Table 1. Recipes to achieve a 1000 ppm (0.1%) bleach solution

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Original strength of bleach | Disinfectant recipe | Volume in standard 10L bucket |
| % | Parts per million | Parts of bleach | Parts of water |  |
| 1 | 10,000 | 1 | 9 | 1000 mL |
| 2 | 20,000 | 1 | 19 | 500 mL |
| 3 | 30,000 | 1 | 29 | 333 mL |
| 4 | 40,000 | 1 | 39 | 250 mL |
| 5 | 50,000 | 1 | 49 | 200 mL |

For other concentrations of chlorine-based sanitisers not listed in the table above, a dilutions calculator can be found on the [department’s website](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/infection-control-guidelines/chlorine-dilutions-calculator) <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/infection-control-guidelines/chlorine-dilutions-calculator>.

### Alternative cleaning and disinfection products (two-step-clean)

Only listed cleaning disinfectant products that are effective against SARS-CoV-2 virus that have been registered on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG) are to be used. A list of ARTG products are available on the [Therapeutics Goods Administration website](https://www.tga.gov.au/disinfectants-use-against-covid-19-artg-legal-supply-australia) <https://www.tga.gov.au/disinfectants-use-against-covid-19-artg-legal-supply-australia>.

Disinfectant solutions should be applied using a cloth or wipe. This can be achieved by using a ready-to-use detergent/disinfectant wipe product or applying a cleaning disinfection solution to a cloth then wiping over the surface to be disinfected.

It is not recommended to use disinfectant fogging for general use against coronavirus (COVID-19) as it can introduce work health and safety risks. Worksafe Australia state that fogging should not be undertaken as a response to, or as an element of, a response to contamination of an area with coronavirus (COVID-19). If using a spray or misting product, spray directly into a cleaning cloth for use.

All disinfectant cleaning products need to be applied for the specified contact time, as per manufacturers’ instructions, before the product is removed.

If using a combined detergent/disinfection wipe, clean the surface, leave for the required contact time, then wipe using a damp cloth. The removal of disinfectant is particularly important if food may be consumed from disinfected surfaces or if surfaces may be placed in the mouth of children.

Regardless of the product used, it is vital that sufficient contact time is allowed. Refer to the manufacturer’s instructions for such information. If no time is specified, leave for 10 minutes.

Soft furnishings or fabric covered items (for example, fabric covered chairs or car seats) that cannot withstand the use of bleach or other disinfectants or be washed in a washing machine, should be cleaned with warm water and detergent to remove any soil or dirt and then steam cleaned. Use steam cleaners that release steam under pressure to ensure appropriate disinfection.

## How to clean and disinfect

Cleaning contractors are responsible for training staff on how to use cleaning equipment and products and how to appropriately clean and disinfect surfaces in line with this procedure.

1. Wear appropriate personal protective equipment as outlined in the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) section below.
2. Thoroughly clean surfaces using detergent (soap) and water. Wipe over surfaces using a TGA coronavirus (COVID-19) approved detergent disinfectant wipe.
3. Apply disinfectant to surfaces using disposable paper towel or a disposable cloth. If non-disposable cloths are used, ensure they are laundered and dried before reusing (see Cleaning equipment).
4. Ensure surfaces remain wet for the period of time required to kill the virus (contact time) as specified by the manufacturer. If no time is specified, leave for 10 minutes.
5. Wipe disinfectant off surfaces with a damp cloth to prevent damage.
6. Remove and discard PPE after each clean into a leak proof plastic bag. Avoid touching the face with gloved or unwashed hands.
7. Wash hands with soap and water and dry or use and alcohol-based hand rub immediately after removing gloves.

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Cleaning contractors are responsible for ensuring staff are trained on how to wear PPE in accordance with DHHS PPE donning and doffing protocols (see [How to put on and take off your PPE](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/how-put-and-take-your-ppe) <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/how-put-and-take-your-ppe>).

A full-length disposable gown, mask, and gloves are to be worn when completing a clean and disinfection of a childcare centre in response to a confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) case.

Additional PPE may be required in accordance with the cleaning products’ manufacturer’s advice such as eye protection.

Where possible disposable PPE should be used as such gloves, gowns, masks and eye protection.

PPE should be disposed of into general waste at the conclusion of cleaning the facility.

## Cleaning equipment

Where possible, disposable cleaning equipment should be used, such as cleaning cloths, mops and PPE (gloves, gowns, masks and eye protection).

A fresh cloth and mop are to be used for each communal area, for example, kitchen, bathroom, lounge.

All disposable cleaning equipment should be placed into a tied, leak-proof plastic bag and disposed of in the general waste stream.

All reusable equipment (for example, cloths and mops) should be placed into a bag to be transported to the laundry. Reusable cloths and mops are to be laundered separately from other cleaning equipment on the hottest wash cycle before re-use.

Reusable gloves are to be washed in hot water and dried.

Re-useable equipment such as vacuum cleaners, buckets, steam cleaners should be cleaned and disinfected after use.

## Ensuring workplace safety

When cleaning on or around electrical equipment/fittings, isolate electrical equipment and turn off power source if possible before cleaning with liquids.

Read the label for the detergent or disinfectant and follow the manufacturer’s recommendations.

Obtain a copy of the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for the detergent or disinfectant and become familiar with the contents.

Wear the appropriate PPE that is identified on the label and the Safety Data Sheet.

## What to clean and disinfect when there is a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19)

Clean and disinfect all areas (for example, offices, bathrooms and common areas) that were used by the person with confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19). Close off the affected area before cleaning and disinfection. If possible, open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation and then commence cleaning and disinfection.

Management of linen, crockery and cutlery and waste

If there are items that can be laundered, such as bedding, launder them in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions using the hottest setting possible. Dry items completely. Do not shake dirty laundry as this may disperse the virus through the air.

Wash crockery and cutlery in a dishwasher on the highest setting possible. If a dishwasher is not available, hand wash with hot soapy water.

## Waste

Dispose of PPE and single use cleaning equipment such as wipes in a leak-proof plastic bag, tied up and disposed in the general waste.

References

* Australian Government. [Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services](https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-preventing-infectious-diseases-early-childhood-education-and-care-services). Accessed June 2020 <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-preventing-infectious-diseases-early-childhood-education-and-care-services>
* [How to put on and take off your PPE](file:///C%3A/Users/dcam1607/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/4DAT70P5/How%20to%20put%20on%20and%20take%20off%20your%20PPE) <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/how-put-and-take-your-ppe>
* [Worksafe Australia](https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/industry-information/early-childhood-education/cleaning#heading--23--tab-toc-what_is_disinfectant_fogging,_and_do_i_need_to_do_it?): <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/industry-information/early-childhood-education/cleaning#heading--23--tab-toc-what\_is\_disinfectant\_fogging,\_and\_do\_i\_need\_to\_do\_it?>

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