

COVID-19: Guidance for operators of shared accommodation facilities

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance and support to the operators of shared accommodation on preventing the spread of COVID-19.

About COVID-19 (novel coronavirus)

COVID-19, like the flu, can be spread from person to person. When a person who has COVID-19 coughs, sneezes or talks, they may spread droplets containing the virus a short distance which quickly settle on surrounding surfaces.

- Coronaviruses can make humans and animals sick. Some coronaviruses, such as COVID-19 can cause illness similar to the common cold or much more serious illnesses.
- Symptoms include fever, head cold, loss of sense of smell, cough, sore throat, fatigue and shortness of breath.
- The virus is most likely to spread from person to person through:
 - direct contact with a person while they are infectious
 - contact with droplets when a person with a confirmed infection coughs or sneezes
 - touching objects or surfaces that were contaminated by droplets (like those from a cough or sneeze) from a person with an infection and then touching your mouth, nose or eyes

Further information is available at <https://covid19.govt.nz/>

Preventing spread of virus

Clean your hands

- This is the most important hygienic measure for preventing infection spread. Best practice is to wash hands vigorously rubbing with soap and running water for at least 20 seconds. Dry thoroughly ideally with a single use hand towel for at least 20 seconds.
- Hand hygiene is critical:
 - After going to the toilet.
 - After cleaning toilets and bathrooms.
 - After handling potentially soiled clothes and bed linen.
 - After handling cleaning accessories such as cloths, buckets and mops.
 - After removing gloves.
 - Before and after every break.
 - Before preparing or delivering food.
- Encourage people to use alcohol gel in addition to regular hand washing. If using hand sanitiser, cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Wearing gloves is not a substitute for hand hygiene. Regardless of whether you wore disposable gloves while cleaning, you should wash your hands regularly.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

Cleaning and Disinfection

General information:

- Clean surfaces using soap and water. Practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces.
- Clean the area or item with soap and water or another detergent if it is dirty. Then, use a disinfectant.
- Household bleach is capable of killing viruses
- Dilute supermarket bleach (sodium hypochlorite) - 1/4 cup of bleach in 10 litres of water
- To be effective it requires a contact time, so allow the diluted bleach solution to sit on surfaces as long as you can
- Always wear disposable gloves when cleaning. When finished, place used gloves in a rubbish bin. Wash your hands immediately after removing gloves
- Use separate cloths of a different colour for cleaning higher risk areas such as toilet and bathroom areas, and restrict their use to these areas only
- Discard cloths/mop heads after use in a biohazard bag, or soak in a bleach solution and hot launder

Cleaning of communal areas and rooms:

- Undertake enhanced cleaning, including toilet and bathroom areas, and frequently touched surfaces such as desks, counters, table tops, telephones, bedside tables, light switches, door handles, bannisters, keyboards twice daily with antiseptic wipes or disinfectant, including bleach solutions
- Clean floors with disinfectant or bleach solution
- Soft furnishings can be steam cleaned. NB: DO NOT use bleach on soft furnishings as it may bleach them.
- Wash items such as dishes, drinking glasses, cups and eating utensils in the dishwasher (you should use a commercial cleaner if you have one) or use soap/detergent and water to wash them thoroughly

Laundry

- Wear disposable gloves while handling soiled items. Wash hands immediately after removing gloves or after handling these items.
- If no gloves are used when handling dirty laundry, be sure to wash hands afterwards.
- If possible, do not shake dirty laundry. This will minimize the possibility of dispersing virus through the air.
- Wash laundry items such as bedding, towels, tea towels, cushion covers and other fabrics and dry thoroughly outside or with a dryer.
- Launder items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely. Dirty laundry from an ill person can be washed with other people's items.
- Clean and disinfect clothes hampers according to guidance above for surfaces. If possible, consider placing a bag liner that is either disposable (can be thrown away) or can be laundered.

Personal protective equipment

Always wear disposable gloves while cleaning. When finished, place used gloves in a rubbish bin. Wash your hands immediately after handling these items.

Product labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product, including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves or aprons and making sure you have good ventilation (e.g., open windows) while you use it.

If your guests are well, your normal cleaning procedures and PPE are appropriate.
If you have guests displaying COVID symptoms, staff should wear nitrile gloves, surgical masks and aprons while cleaning.
If your guests feel unwell and have had contact with a recent overseas traveller or confirmed or probable case, or are displaying COVID symptoms, call Healthline on 0800 358 5453 and stay isolated from other people. Visit health.govt.nz/covid-19 for more information.
Ministry of Health link for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirement for non-essential workers https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/hp7353-ppe-ipc-poster-nonessential-final-28mar2020-v2_0.pdf

Guests who become ill

- If a person becomes unwell and displaying COVID symptoms, they should contact health line on 0800 358 5453 or call GP before you visit.
- Staff should avoid contact with guests who become unwell with COVID symptoms.
- Consider how you can manage a person unwell with COVID symptoms in the short term.
E.g.: designated toilet, additional cleaning, delivery of food to the room

Management of guests

Accommodation providers should:

- Provide written information to guests explaining the procedures that will apply in your facility (i.e. number of people allowed in the shared amenities at one time. Keeping in mind the 2meter physical distancing rule)
- For welfare related issues follow the link: <https://covid19.govt.nz/assets/resources/Welfare-AOG-Factsheet-24-March-2020.pdf>
- Support guests to recognise symptoms and report them as appropriate; those who have developed any symptoms should phone the Healthline 0800 358 5453
- Put in place communication strategies to ensure individuals are kept informed daily about relevant aspects of their health and welfare
- Identify a liaison person(s) to lead communication with the local health authorities

Taking care of mental wellbeing

We are in uncertain and unprecedented times, and everyone will respond differently to how COVID-19 is impacting them. It's important not only to look after our physical health but also look after our mental health at the same time. Advice on ways to look after your mental wellbeing is provided on the Ministry of Health website: www.health.govt.nz/covid19-mental-wellbeing

Managing Communal facilities for staff and guests (i.e. shared kitchen, etc.)

- Contact to be maintained only with people staying in the same room; **common social and recreation areas to be closed**; split shift access to common areas (i.e. kitchen, showers etc.).
- limiting, or eliminating if possible, physical interaction between, e.g. through physical distancing, split shifts, staggered meal breaks and flexible working arrangements
- limiting, or eliminating if possible, physical interaction with and between customers, e.g. through online or phone orders, contactless delivery or managed entry (while also avoiding crowding outside), and physical distancing both inside and outside the premises

Management of staff

- Management should provide information and brief all employees and contractors, including domestic and cleaning staff, on relevant information and procedures to prevent the spread illness
- Staff with underlying health conditions, or who are over 70 years, should not be working
- Exclude any staff member at the first suggestion of illness.
- Staff cannot work if they:
 - have been overseas in the last 14 days (they must self-isolate for 14 days from their departure). For more information, please see information on self-isolation
 - have been in close contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus in the last 14 days (they must isolate themselves for 14 days after the date of last contact with the confirmed case)