



**Community Infection Prevention and Control
Policy for Domiciliary Care staff**

**Safe management of
the care environment**

**SAFE MANAGEMENT OF THE CARE
ENVIRONMENT**

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This guidance document has been adopted as a policy document by:

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SAFE MANAGEMENT OF THE CARE ENVIRONMENT

SAFE MANAGEMENT OF THE CARE ENVIRONMENT

1. Introduction

This Policy is 1 of the 10 'Standard infection control precautions' (SICPs) referred to by NHS England and NHS Improvement.

Note. This policy covers cleaning of the environment. Information on cleaning equipment can be found in the 'Safe management of care equipment Policy for Domiciliary Care staff'.

All staff should know and understand the importance of thorough cleaning.

- A clean environment reduces the risk of spreading infection.
- Most micro-organisms, such as bacteria, viruses and fungi, are found in dust and dirt. The amount of micro-organisms in the environment can be reduced by routine cleaning and vacuuming.
- Some micro-organisms are harder to kill and, therefore, enhanced cleaning with disinfectants is required (see 'Disinfection' below).
- Hands regularly come into contact with surfaces. If hands are not washed, they will transfer any micro-organisms present. This risk is always present, but will increase if cleaning is neglected.
- Items to be cleaned and disinfected should be in a good state of repair to ensure effective cleaning and disinfection.

2. Cleaning and disinfection

Cleaning is **essential** before disinfection is carried out. A disinfectant solution is not effective if there is dirt or visible soiling, e.g. urine, faeces, blood.

Cleaning	Is a process that removes dust, dirt including soiling, body fluids and large numbers of micro-organisms
Disinfection	Is a process that further reduces the number of micro-organisms to a level at which they are not harmful. It is only effective if the surface is thoroughly cleaned with a detergent solution first. Disinfectant should be used when dealing with blood/body fluid spillages or when a service user has a known or suspected infection. When using disinfectants, manufacturer's instructions must be followed in order to achieve safe practice

3. What you need for cleaning the environment

- Disposable apron.
- Separate cloths for cleaning kitchens and toilets/bathrooms.
- Reusable domestic gloves for routine household duties. Domestic gloves can be worn by other staff providing skin is intact and hands are washed before wearing them. Always wash domestic gloves with detergent and warm water, rinsed on the outer surface, before taking them off and dried after use. Then wash hands after removing them.
- Disposable gloves for cleaning toilets, commodes, raised toilet seats and urinal bottles.
- Detergent - warm water and a general purpose detergent, e.g. washing up liquid, is suitable for cleaning most surfaces.
- Disinfectant - when disinfection is required, household bleach at the following dilutions shown in the table below should be used.

Note: Household bleach, should not be used on soft furnishings, untreated wood and carpets as it will cause 'whitening/bleaching'. Therefore, only detergent and warm water should be used on such surfaces.

Disinfection dilution guide
Environment contaminated with blood/blood stained body fluid
Household bleach 10,000 parts per million (ppm) available chlorine Dilution of 1 in 10, e.g. 10 ml of household bleach in 100 ml of water or 100 ml in 1 litre of water.
Environment contaminated with body fluid (not blood/blood stained), or when the service user has a known infection
Household bleach 1,000 ppm available chlorine Dilution of 1 in 100, e.g. 10 ml of household bleach in 1 litre of water.

- When dealing with blood and body fluid spillages, see Section 4.
- To ensure efficacy, bleach solutions must be made up to the manufacturer's instructions, i.e. measure the product and water accurately, no guesses.
- Discard bleach solutions 24 hours after making up.

4. Safe management of blood and body fluids

Dealing with blood/blood stained body fluid spillages

Items contaminated with blood or any body fluids stained with blood should be disinfected promptly and then the affected area cleaned to reduce the risk of infection spreading (see table below).

Best practice is to use a chlorine-based product such as household bleach, following the manufacturer's instructions on the bottle where available, or prepare as below.

Action for blood and/or blood stained body fluid spillages

Dilution of 10,000 parts per million (ppm) available chlorine

Preparation of a household bleach solution: dilution of 1 in 10, e.g. 10 ml of household bleach in 100 ml of water.

1. Wear disposable gloves and apron.
2. Ventilate the area, e.g. open windows/doors, as fumes will be released from the chlorine.
3. Cover the spill with paper towels, e.g. kitchen roll.
4. Pour the household bleach solution on top of the paper towels and leave for the required contact time of 5 to 10 minutes.
5. Clear away paper towels/spillage, dispose of by putting in a plastic bag.
6. With a disposable cloth, clean the area using detergent and warm water, then leave to dry or dry with paper towels.
7. Dispose of cloth and paper towels in the plastic bag.
8. Remove gloves and apron and dispose of in the plastic bag. Tie/seal the bag and place in the waste bin.
9. Wash, rinse and dry hands thoroughly to prevent the transmission of infection.

Dealing with body fluid spillages (not blood/blood stained)

Clean up body fluids, such as urine, faeces and vomit, promptly. The affected area should be cleaned and then disinfected (see table below) to reduce the risk of infection spreading.

Best practice is to use a chlorine-based product such as household bleach, following the manufacturer's instructions on the bottle where available.

Action for body fluid spillages***Dilution of 1,000 parts per million (ppm) available chlorine***

Preparation of a household bleach solution: dilution of 1 in 100, e.g. 10 ml of household bleach in 1 litre of water.

1. Wear disposable gloves and apron.
2. Ventilate the area, e.g. open windows/doors, as fumes will be released from the chlorine.
3. Soak up any excess liquid or clean up any solid material using paper towels, e.g. kitchen roll.
4. Clear away paper towels/spillage, dispose of by putting in a plastic bag.
5. With a disposable cloth, clean the area with detergent and warm water followed by the household bleach solution, then leave to dry or dry with paper towels.
6. Dispose of cloth and paper towels in the plastic bag.
7. Remove gloves and apron and dispose of in the plastic bag. Tie/seal the bag and place in the waste bin.
8. Wash, rinse and dry hands thoroughly to prevent the transmission of infection.

Note: Do not use a chlorine-based disinfectant solution directly on urine as toxic fumes will be released.

5. Best practice for cleaning

- Staff should wash their hands before putting on and after removing gloves.
- Cushions, e.g. seat, pressure relieving, wheelchair, should be cleaned regularly and have removable covers to allow inspection of the inside surface of the cover and the cushion.
- Underneath surfaces, e.g. chairs, tables, should be cleaned and inspected regularly.
- Wash, rinse and leave mops and cloths to air dry after each use. Do not leave mops or cloths soaking overnight.

Best practice for cleaning

1. Work from clean to dirty areas	Start cleaning in the cleanest areas and finish in the dirtier areas, e.g. when cleaning the bathroom, leave the toilet until last and use a separate cloth
2. Work from high to low areas	This helps to prevent cross-infection as it stops contamination of clean areas from dirty areas
3. Leave all surfaces clean and dry	It is important to leave cleaned surfaces as dry as possible. This helps to prevent mould and bacterial growth
4. Change cleaning solutions and cloths often	One of the main causes of contamination is the use of one cloth for all cleaning. Change your cleaning solution and cloth when it looks dirty so that you are removing dust and dirt and are not just moving it from one area to another. Separate cloths should be used for cleaning bathrooms and toilets. These cloths should not be used to clean other areas, e.g. kitchen
5. Wash your hands often	Dirty hands and dirty gloves soil clean surfaces. Wash your reusable domestic gloves after use and then wash your hands

6. References

Department of Health (2015) *The Health and Social Care Act 2008: Code of Practice on the prevention and control of infections and related guidance*

National Patient Safety Agency (2009) *The Revised Healthcare Cleaning Manual*

NHS England and NHS Improvement (March 2019) *Standard infection control precautions: national hand hygiene and personal protective equipment policy*