



**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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Organisation: .....

Signed: .....

Job Title: .....

Date Adopted: .....

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# SAFE MANAGEMENT OF THE CARE ENVIRONMENT

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## 1. Introduction

This Policy is one of the '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 and viruses, 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.

Always use standard infection control precautions and transmission based precautions (SICPs and TBPs), refer to the 'SICPs and TBPs Policy for Domiciliary Care staff'.

**When caring for service users in relation to COVID-19 or any other new emerging infections, staff should refer to national infection prevention and control guidance.**

## 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 (stools), blood.

<b>Cleaning</b>	Is a process that removes dust, dirt including soiling, body fluids and large numbers of micro-organisms
<b>Disinfection</b>	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

- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).
  - A general purpose detergent, e.g. washing up liquid, and warm water, is suitable for cleaning most surfaces.
  - Separate cloths for cleaning kitchens and toilets/bathrooms.
  - Staff should wash their hands before putting on and after removing each item of PPE, e.g. pair of gloves, apron.
  - Reusable domestic gloves should be worn for routine household duties.
  - Disposable gloves for cleaning toilets, commodes, raised toilet seats and urine bottles.
  - Domestic gloves can be worn by other staff providing skin is intact and hands are washed before wearing them.
  - When a service user has a known or suspected infection, or the care environment has been contaminated with blood or body fluids, disinfection should be performed after cleaning.
  - Disinfectant - when disinfection is required, household bleach at the following dilutions shown in the table below should be used. If an item is unsuitable for disinfecting with household bleach an alternative product may be used. At minimum, the product should be effective against bacteria and viruses and if the service user is known or suspected to have *Clostridioides difficile*, a sporicidal produce must be used.
- Note: Household bleach, should not be used on soft furnishings, untreated wood and carpets as it will cause 'whitening/bleaching'. Therefore, an alternative disinfectant as above, that is suitable to use, or only detergent and warm water should be used on such surfaces.**
- No disinfectant acts instantly, it should be left on the surface for the manufacturers recommended contact time, or left to air dry.

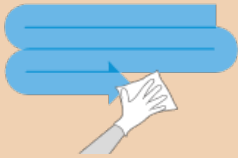
- To ensure efficacy, disinfectant solutions must be made up to the manufacturer's instructions, i.e. measure the product and water accurately, no guesses.
- Discard bleach solutions 24 hours after making up.
- When dealing with blood and body fluid spillages, refer to the 'Safe management of blood and body fluids Policy for Domiciliary Care staff' and the 'Safe management of blood and body fluids Policy for Domiciliary Care staff'.

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

## 4. Best practice for cleaning

- Staff should wash their hands before putting on and after removing and disposing of each item of PPE, e.g. pair of gloves, apron.
- Cushions, e.g. armchairs, should be cleaned regularly and on those that have removable covers, the inside surface of the cover and the cushion are inspected regularly.
- 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.
- Domestic gloves should be washed with detergent and warm water, rinsed and dried after use.

Best practice for cleaning	
<b>1. Work from clean to dirty areas</b>	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
<b>2. Work from high to low areas</b>	This helps to prevent cross-infection as it stops contamination of clean areas from dirty areas. When

	<p>cleaning or disinfecting, clean all surfaces using an 'S' shaped pattern from clean to dirty, top to bottom, taking care not to go over the same area twice. This cleaning motion reduces the amount of micro-organisms that may be transferred from a dirty area to a clean area</p> 
<b>3. Leave all surfaces clean and dry</b>	It is important to leave cleaned surfaces as dry as possible. This helps to prevent mould and bacterial growth
<b>4. Change cleaning solutions and cloths often</b>	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 <b>not</b> be used to clean other areas, e.g. kitchen
<b>5. Wash your hands often</b>	Dirty hands and dirty gloves soil clean surfaces. Wash your reusable domestic gloves after use and then wash your hands

## 5. Infection Prevention and Control resources, education and training

The Community Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Team have produced a wide range of innovative educational and IPC resources designed to assist Domiciliary Care in achieving compliance with *The Health and Social Care Act 2008: Code of Practice on the prevention and control of infections and related guidance* and CQC registration requirements.

These resources are either free to download from the website or available at a minimal cost covering administration and printing:

- IPC Policy documents for Domiciliary Care staff
- 'Preventing Infection Workbook: Guidance for Domiciliary Care staff'
- IPC audit tools, posters, leaflets and factsheets
- 'IPC Bulletin for Domiciliary Care staff'

In addition, we hold educational study events in North Yorkshire and York and can arrange bespoke training packages. Prices vary depending on your requirements and location.

Further information on these high quality evidence-based resources is available at [www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk](http://www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk).

### 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*