



**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:

Adoption Date:

Review Date:

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SAFE MANAGEMENT OF THE CARE ENVIRONMENT

1. Introduction

This Policy is one of the 'Standard infection control precautions' (SICPs) referred to by NHS England in the *National infection prevention and control manual (NIPCM) for England*.

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

- A clean environment reduces the risk of spreading infection.
- Most microorganisms, e.g. bacteria and viruses, are found in dust and dirt. The amount of microorganisms in the environment can be reduced by routine cleaning and vacuuming.
- Some microorganisms are harder to kill and, therefore, enhanced cleaning with disinfectants is required (see Section 3).
- Hands regularly come into contact with surfaces. If hands are not washed, they will transfer any microorganisms present. This risk is always present, but will increase if cleaning is neglected.
- Items and surfaces to be cleaned and disinfected should be in a good state of repair to ensure effective cleaning and disinfection.

Always use SICPs and, when required, 'Transmission based precautions' (TBPs), refer to the 'SICPs and TBPs Policy'.

When caring for service users in relation to any new or emerging infection, staff should refer to national infection prevention and control guidance.

2. Responsibilities

When carers provide household cleaning services, it is important they understand their responsibilities such as:

- Whose responsibility it is for cleaning different areas of the environment
- The frequency of cleaning the different areas of the environment
- The method of cleaning, including the products to use
- The method, frequency and responsibility for cleaning equipment, which includes reference to the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning
- The training required for cleaning
- Arrangements for additional cleaning requirements, e.g. in the event of blood

and/or body fluid spillages

- Arrangements to prevent cross-contamination, for example implementation of colour coding of cleaning materials
- How to safely dispose of items, such as cleaning cloths and personal protective equipment (PPE)

All staff have a responsibility to leave the environment in a tidy state, e.g. aprons, gloves, catheter bags, have been appropriately disposed of.

3. Cleaning and disinfection

Cleaning	Is a process that removes dust, dirt including soiling, body fluids and large numbers of microorganisms. Cleaning is essential before disinfection is carried out
Disinfection	<p>Is a process that further reduces the number of microorganisms to a level at which they are not harmful. Cleaning must take place before disinfection to ensure that disinfection is effective. Alternatively, a combined '2 in 1' product that cleans and disinfects in one step can be used.</p> <p>A disinfectant should be used when dealing with blood and/or body fluids, e.g. urine, faeces, or when a service user has a confirmed or suspected infection.</p> <p>When using disinfectants, manufacturer's instructions must be followed</p>

4. Cleaning and disinfecting the care environment

- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).
- In a supported living or sheltered housing complex, best practice is to adopt the 'National colour coding scheme for cleaning materials and equipment', see Section 5.
- In a service user's own home, best practice is to use separate cloths for cleaning kitchens and toilets/bathrooms.
- Detergent wipes or a general purpose neutral detergent, e.g. washing up liquid, and warm water, are suitable for cleaning most surfaces.
- Staff should wash their hands before putting on and after removing PPE.
- Disposable gloves for cleaning toilets, commodes, raised toilet seats and urine bottles.
- Reusable domestic gloves can be worn for routine household duties.
- 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 confirmed or suspected infection, or the care environment has been contaminated with blood or body fluids, disinfection should be performed after cleaning.
- When disinfection is required, household bleach at the 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.
- **Household bleach should not be used on soft furnishings, untreated wood and carpets, as it will cause 'whitening/bleaching'. Therefore, only general purpose neutral detergent and warm water, an alternative disinfectant, a carpet shampoo machine or steam cleaner, should be used.**
- Diluted chlorine-based disinfectant solutions, such as household bleach, become less effective after 24 hours. When a solution is made, the date and time should be recorded and the solution disposed of after 24 hours.
- No disinfectant acts instantly, to ensure that microorganisms are killed, always leave disinfectant solutions for the contact time as per manufacturer's instructions.

Disinfection dilution guide for household bleach

Environment contaminated with blood/blood stained body fluid

Dilution of 1 in 10, e.g. 10 ml of household bleach in 100 ml of cold water or 100 ml in 1 litre of cold water

Environment contaminated with body fluid (not blood/blood stained), or when the service user has a confirmed or suspected infection

Dilution of 1 in 100, e.g. 10 ml of household bleach in 1 litre of cold water

5. Colour coding of cleaning equipment

- In a supported living or sheltered housing complex, to reduce the risk of transmission of infection between different areas, best practice is to adopt the 'National colour coding scheme for cleaning materials and equipment'.
- Colour coding of cleaning materials and equipment ensures that these items are not used in multiple areas, therefore, reducing the risk of transmission of infection from one area to another, e.g. toilet to kitchen.
- Single use disposable cloths are recommended. If reusable cloths are used, they should be washed after use and stored dried.

National colour coding scheme - for cleaning materials and equipment

It is recommended to adopt the national colour code for cleaning materials. All cleaning items, e.g. disposable cloths, mops, buckets, aprons and gloves, should be colour coded

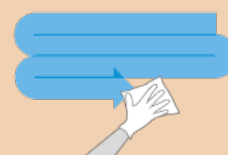
RED	Bathrooms, showers, toilets, basins and bathroom floors
BLUE	General areas, including lounges, offices, corridors and bedrooms
GREEN	Kitchen areas, including satellite kitchen areas and food storage areas
YELLOW	Bedrooms when a service user has a confirmed or suspected infection and is cared for in their own room (isolation)

6. Best practice for cleaning

- Staff should wash their hands before putting on and after removing PPE.
- Cushions, e.g. armchairs, should be cleaned regularly.
- When cushion covers or furniture covers are removable, the inside of the cover and the cushion should be inspected regularly.
- Underneath surfaces, e.g. chairs, tables, should be cleaned and inspected regularly.
- Use disposable mop heads and cloths. If reusable mop heads and cloths are used, wash, rinse and leave mops to air dry after each use, do not leave to soak.
- Mop buckets: wash in general purpose neutral detergent, e.g. washing up liquid, and warm water, and dry with paper towels or store upside down to air dry.
- Domestic gloves should be washed with general purpose neutral detergent, e.g. washing up liquid, and warm water, rinsed and dried after use.

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. This helps to prevent cross-infection as it stops contamination of clean areas from dirty areas
2. Work from high to low areas	When cleaning or disinfecting, clean all surfaces using an 'S' shaped pattern starting at the point furthest away, overlapping slightly, taking care not to go over the same area twice. This cleaning motion reduces the amount of microorganisms that may be transferred from a dirty area to a clean area



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. Disinfected surfaces should be left to air dry as per manufacturer's instructions
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

7. Blood and body fluid spillages

Refer to the 'Safe management of blood and body fluid spillages Policy'.

8. Infection Prevention and Control resources, education and training

See Appendix 1 for the 'Safe management of the care environment: Quick reference guide'.

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:

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

In addition, we hold educational study events in North Yorkshire.

Further information on these high quality evidence-based resources is available at www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk.

9. References

Department of Health and Social Care (2024) *Infection prevention and control: resource for adult social care*

Department of Health and Social Care (Updated December 2022) *Health and Social Care Act 2008: code of practice on the prevention and control of infections and related guidance*

NHS England (Updated 2024) *National infection prevention and control manual (NIPCM) for England*

10. Appendices


Appendix 1: Safe management of the care environment: Quick reference guide



Safe management of the care environment: Quick reference guide for Domiciliary Care

Cleaning	A process that removes dust, dirt, including soiling, body fluids and large numbers of microorganisms. Cleaning is essential before disinfection is carried out.
Disinfection	<p>A process to further reduce the number of microorganisms to a level at which they are not harmful. Cleaning must take place before disinfection to ensure that disinfection is effective. A combined '2 in 1' product that cleans and disinfects in one step can be used.</p> <p>A disinfectant should be used when dealing with blood and/or body fluids, e.g. urine, faeces, or when a service user has a confirmed or suspected infection.</p>

Best practice for cleaning

1. Work from clean to dirty	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. This helps to prevent cross-infection as it stops contamination of clean areas from dirty areas.
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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

Equipment used for cleaning

- Use detergent wipes or general purpose neutral detergent.
- In a supported living or sheltered housing complex, best practice is to adopt the 'National colour coding scheme for cleaning materials and equipment'.
- In a service user's own home, best practice is to use separate cloths for cleaning kitchens and toilets/bathrooms.
- Single use disposable cloths are recommended. If reusable cloths are used, they should be washed after use and stored dried.
- Best practice is to use single use mop heads and cloths. If reusable mop heads and cloths are used, wash, rinse and leave to air dry after each use, do not leave to soak.
- Wash mop buckets in detergent, warm water and dry with paper towels or store upside down.

For further information, please refer to the full Policy which can be found at www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk/domiciliary-care/policies/

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