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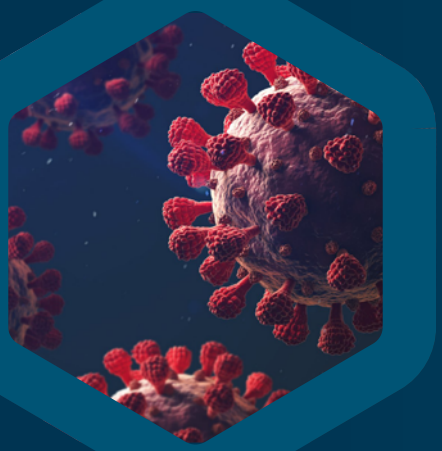

KNOWLEDGE SERIES

COVID-19
How healthcare infection prevention and control can provide effective solutions for hospitality

HOSPITALITY

Why the Hospitality Sector remains one of the most vulnerable sectors to COVID-19 outbreaks and how to protect your patrons

With £80 billion having been wiped off sales in just 12 months, the UK hospitality sector is understandably keen to welcome the maximum number of customers back as quickly as possible. Having navigated and adapted to the challenges during various stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, the sector still remains vulnerable to potential outbreaks. Hospitality venues have had to recognise COVID-19 as one of their everyday workplace hazards, staff will need to be vigilant to minimise the ongoing threat of outbreaks and further potential closures.

The hospitality sector already had a strong reputation for good hygiene before the pandemic, with strict guidelines and enforcement measures in place to keep customers and staff safe. An infection control insight report published by JLA (January 2021)[1] found that 77% of 2,000 respondents had greater concerns about hygiene and infection control in hospitality settings than a year previously.

This has heightened the need for greater levels of cleaning with staff no longer relegated to the backrooms and 'out of hours' work schedules as restaurants, leisure centres, pubs, bars and nightclubs step up the visibility of their prevention efforts. This serves to give customers confidence in returning and helping the sector on its path to recovery.

But this isn't about performative steps, it's about real action. It isn't enough to look clean as dangerous pathogens are invisible to the human eye. Customers will be much more attentive to details they may not have considered before, so passing close scrutiny will be vital. If a hospitality business has a poor reputation in regard to hygiene, 65% of those surveyed would never use the business again due to the heightened infection risk.[2]

When it comes down to it, outbreaks and closures resulting from poor infection prevention and control will be hard to divert attention from and consequently there could be disastrous effects financially.

In this article, we cover key areas of infection prevention and control to help ensure best practice and further minimise risk:

1. Lessons from Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control
2. Cleaning and Disinfection
3. Identifying common touch points across settings
4. Waste management
5. Staff education

[1] JLA Infection Control Insight Report, January 2021
[2] UK Hospitality Quarterly Tracker with CGA

01

Lessons from healthcare infection prevention and control

From menus to bathroom flushes, card machines to bar counters, there are so many touchpoints in a hospitality venue where pathogens could be transferred. Taking steps to minimise the likelihood of coronaviruses passing from these surfaces to people is critical in protecting people and the wider community from contraction of disease.

> Regular cleaning and disinfection are part of the government guidance to prevent and control infection but what level of cleaning and disinfection is required?

A lot of cleaning terms have been used in the media as to what is required to prevent and control the outbreak of harmful diseases such as COVID-19. Rather than providing clarification it has often led to confusion as to what the correct definitions are and what is actually required in terms of cleaning and disinfection practices to provide a safer hospitality environment. One of the most commonly used terms is 'deep cleaning'.

A deep clean is defined by The British Institute of Cleaning Science (BICSC) as:

"A periodic clean that addresses each surface with a more intensive clean than the usual daily clean."

This demonstrates the ambiguity of the term because what constitutes a 'more intensive clean' is widely open to interpretation.

01

Lessons from healthcare infection prevention and control - cont.

Such interpretations do not mention disinfection. We recommend that frequently touched surfaces are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected at least once a day, at the beginning or end of the working day and ideally both. Between these practises, periodic cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces should also take place to minimise the risk of infection. Attention should be given to frequently touched items such as pay terminals, PDA's, laptops, tablets, PC's, mice, keyboards etc. COVID-19 is spread by small droplets in the air. Once settled on surrounding surfaces the risk of residual infectious virus is considerably higher in a 48 hour period. Research has found that coronaviruses can be inactivated within a minute by disinfecting surfaces with a solution that has a 62-71% alcohol concentration.[3]

The level of cleaning required in healthcare settings is often referred to as 'clinical cleaning' which has been adopted by hospitality businesses such as hotels in their efforts to eradicate and control harmful coronaviruses. An article in the Annals Of Internal Medicine, considers the term 'environmental cleaning' the first part of which is defined as:
"Environmental cleaning is important for reducing microbial contamination of surfaces and subsequent risk for HCAIs (healthcare associated infections). Environmental cleaning is a complex, multifaceted process and involves the physical action of cleaning surfaces to remove organic and inorganic material, followed by application of a disinfectant, as well as monitoring strategies to ensure the appropriateness of these practices."[4]

> These principles can be transferred to hospitality for tighter infection prevention and control. The complexities can be largely removed by using a product with the ability to clean and disinfect an area at the same time which will kill dangerous pathogens responsible for harmful diseases.

[3] Persistence of Coronaviruses on inanimate surfaces and their inactivation with biocidal agents", Journal of Hospital Infection, Vol 104, Issue 3, March 2020 https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0195670120300463

[4] Cleaning Hospital Room Surfaces to Prevent Health Care-Associated Infections', A Technical Brief, Annals of Internal Medicine, 20th October 2015

02

Cleaning & Disinfection

Traditionally organisations have applied a detergent to clean the area, followed by the application of a disinfectant product.

A highly effective antimicrobial agent is required within the disinfection product to kill a wide range of dangerous pathogens and have a short contact time which ensure both maximum effectiveness and minimal disruption to business operations.

> Should your venue be subject to a COVID-19 outbreak, one of the methods recommended in the UK Government guidance is "a combined detergent disinfectant solution at a dilution of 1,000 parts per million available chlorine (ppm av.cl.)" [5]

Combined surfactant and disinfectant solutions are widely used in healthcare organisations such as the NHS as part of their infection prevention and control measures. This includes usage of dual products throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, proven to help keep staff, patients and their families safe.

The dual action gives the user the ability to carry out the level of cleaning and disinfection required as part of infection prevention and control in one easy step. To combine the two properties in one product the surfactant must be compatible with the antimicrobial agent (disinfectant) that is used. This is crucial, as a surfactant that is not compatible may cause a reaction reducing both cleaning and disinfection performance. Residues of incompatible cleaning chemicals remaining on the surface after preliminary cleaning may also reduce the performance of the disinfection stage. This could mean dangerous pathogens remain on the surface, invisible to the eye.

Hypochlorous acid is widely recognised by scientists as one of the most effective chemicals for killing dangerous pathogens. It has the ability to break down tough biofilms that can be built up on surfaces to protect dangerous antimicrobials. Many other chemicals used to disinfect do not have this ability.

[5] COVID 19: Cleaning in non-healthcare settings outside of the home (updated July 2021), Public Health England

02

Cleaning & Disinfection cont.

Hypochlorous acid is found in a number of different disinfectant products. Due to its high reactivity, particular care must be taken when selecting the correct surfactant to use in combination with Hypochlorous acid to ensure compatibility. As well as greater reliability a one-step product reduces the complexity and process time. By eliminating stages from the process there is reduced staff exposure to hazards and less chance of cross-contamination of cleaning materials. The net result of this is increased safety, less disruption to operations and core business that all lead to improved cost efficiencies.

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A hospital-grade biocidal chemical formulation used in combination with a compatible detergent will achieve significant antimicrobial activity providing high-level disinfection. This greater level of protection will help hospitality business stay open and allow all patrons to enjoy and move freely within the environment, reducing the fear of infection. It will also give hospitality businesses confidence in achieving and maintaining a high standard of hygiene.
When selecting a hospital-grade, one-step cleaning and disinfection product, it is important to check the EN standards to which it has been certified. These will indicate the range of pathogens (including viruses) against which it has been tested and approved according to a particular method of application and area of use. The general standards to look out for include: EN 13624, EN 13727, EN 14348, EN 14476, EN 16615, EN 1276, EN 13697, EN 13704 and EN 1650.

Consideration for handling spills like blood, vomit and urine should also be made. These spills pose a biohazard risk so the use of an all-in-one spill kit within hospitality premises will ensure they are effectively handled and reduce the stress for staff in dealing with unpleasant incidents.

03

Identification of common touch points

To ensure maximum efficacy, the approach should be designed around the environment, informed by the types of surfaces, their location and the frequency with which they are contacted.

We recommend developing a simple tool as part of your audit to identify contact points within your environment and the level of attention they should be given according to frequency of contact.

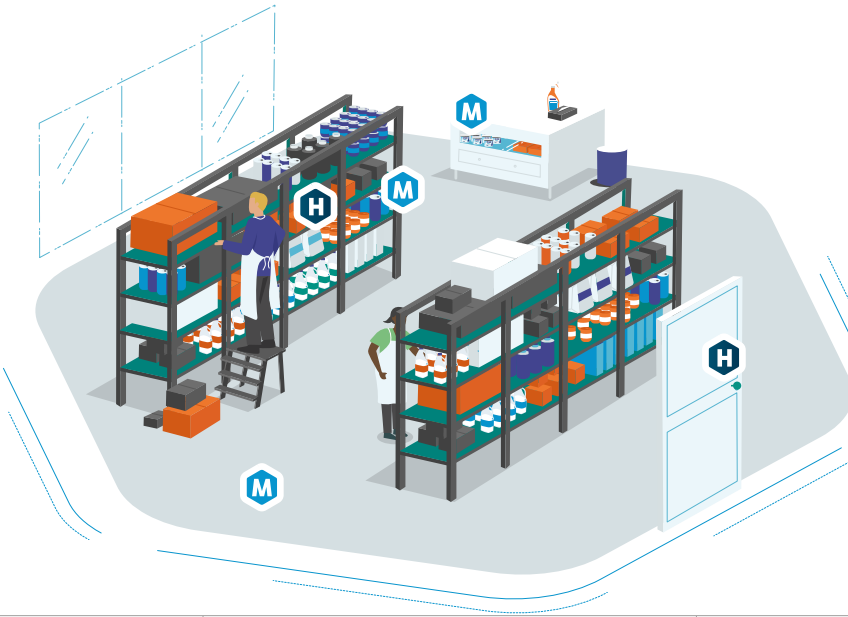
To help you identify areas to look at within your business we have developed a series of contact frequency maps for individual hospitality industries. Each map gives an indication of areas within typical settings that need attention and the risk they present according to the probability of frequent contact. Of course, no two environments are the same and many factors such as footfall and the concentration of people can dramatically affect the risk level. Each illustration should only be used as a guide in helping you to identify the level of attention individual items require in keeping your staff, customers, business and the wider community safe from viral transmission.

Catering

A catering business can comprise a multitude of environments that need careful attention for regular cleaning and disinfection. It can be a smaller business operating from home or a purpose built premises with a kitchen, storage area(s) / warehouse, reception and staff changing room facility etc. Potentially any fixture or object in these settings contacted by a person can lead to the transfer of dangerous pathogens. This includes the most inconspicuous of items such as packaged food goods that have the potential to be touched by several people from delivery

to storage and usage within the kitchen. When considering contact frequency, systems should be implemented to limit this as much as possible (please see section 5, 'education' for more details).

Here we show typical fixtures within these environments and identify the likely attention they will need for cleaning and disinfection to reduce the risk of transmission of pathogens (including viruses) as part of infection prevention and control practices.



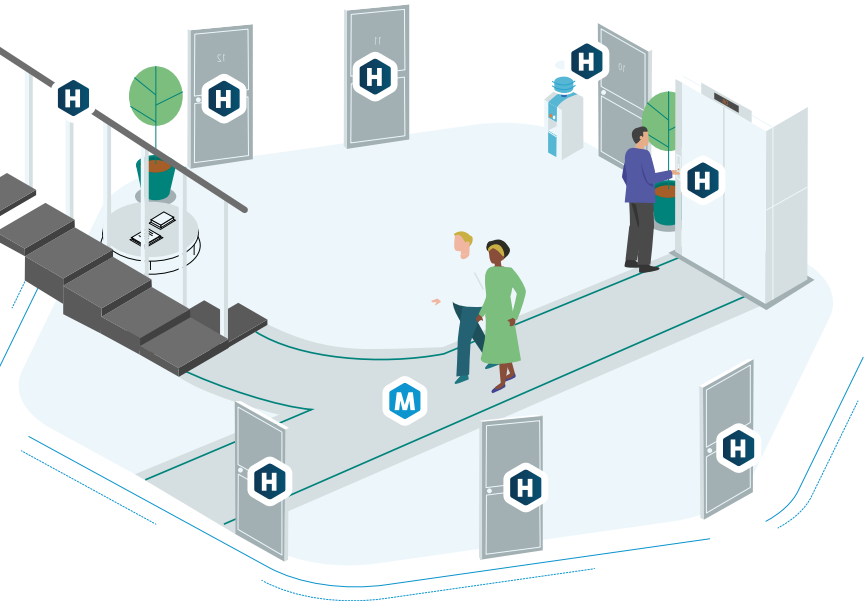
H Indicates a high risk of frequent contact and transmission of pathogens to surface

M Indicates a medium risk of frequent contact and transmission of pathogens to surface

L Indicates a low risk of frequent contact and transmission of pathogens to surface

Hotel

The footfall within a hotel can seem to be limitless with visitors entering and leaving the premises at any given time. In theory guests could be frequenting different areas front of house such as the hotel lobby, restaurant(s), gift shops, gymnasiums, lifts and corridors. Then you have the back of house where staff will be working at reception desks, in offices, kitchens, cleaning



rooms, bars etc. Depending on their area of work members of staff will also be working front of house mixing with different customer groups. Here our frequent contact maps take three of the most populated areas – a hotel lobby, room and corridor area where dangerous pathogens can be transferred to surfaces and from one person to another. Our maps identify common areas for frequent contact and the level of attention they are likely to require for cleaning and disinfection.

H Indicates a high risk of frequent contact and transmission of pathogens to surface

M Indicates a medium risk of frequent contact and transmission of pathogens to surface

L Indicates a low risk of frequent contact and transmission of pathogens to surface

Leisure Centre

A leisure centre can have a high-volume of people entering and leaving the premises during working hours. This increases the risk of transmission of dangerous pathogens (including viruses). Often having a variety of facilities, it is important that each environment (receptions, lifts and stairs, restaurants, gymnasiums, swimming pools etc.) is audited separately and areas of frequent contact are identified and given the appropriate level of attention with regards to cleaning and disinfection. If this is done successfully it can help mitigate the risk of dangerous pathogen transfer to surfaces.

Our maps show typical environments within a leisure centre and the areas that need particular attention and the likely risk they present as a result of contact frequency.

H — Indicates a high risk of frequent contact and transmission of pathogens to surface

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L — Indicates a low risk of frequent contact and transmission of pathogens to surface

Restaurant / bar / public house

The frequent movement and socialising of different groups of people within these premises can lead to regular transference of dangerous pathogens to surfaces. The map below highlights the various surfaces in these environments that can be touched and by a multitude of people in any given time. When planning cleaning and disinfection, areas such as underneath tables and chairs should also be considered. Although not likely to be as frequently contacted as immediate areas they still present a hazardous area where microorganisms can lay undetected and present a high risk of transfer within a forty eight hour period. This map should be used to help identify where hazards can lie and the attention each of them require to help eradicate pathogens such as viruses that can lead to the outbreak of harmful diseases such as COVID-19.

H — Indicates a high risk of frequent contact and transmission of pathogens to surface

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04

Waste management

Many businesses have adopted disposable aprons and masks as a method of protection, initially as a result of Government guidance but with a number choosing to keep these in place to give customers confidence.

This, coupled with customers' own choices on mask-wearing and items like disposable tableware, has resulted in increased waste. Bins should be emptied and cleaned often so they do not provide a breeding ground for bacteria's that could lead to infection outbreaks, and extra bins should be provided for staff and customers to dispose of items. Consideration can be given to having offensive waste bags to maintain a clean and hygienic environment.

With the likely ongoing adoption of PPE in hospitality, businesses may wish to consider biodegradeable options.

05

Staff education

A review of organisational processes to accommodate the new practices will be required. The later part of The Annals of Internal Medicine definition of 'environmental cleaning' states the following:

> "In addition, contextual factors, such as management tools and organisational structure, and culture can affect the implementation and effectiveness of cleaning, disinfecting, and monitoring strategies."

Throughout the business, staff will need support with effective training and education about cleaning and disinfection, and clear communication about their individual role in the process.

To ensure maximum efficacy, the approach should be designed around the environment, informed by the types of surfaces, their location and the frequency with which they are contacted.

The employees' acceptance of upscaled cleaning measures cannot be underestimated as it will fall to them to put these into practice for the safety of all concerned. Ensuring that these new regimes are effective and not simply performative is critical in helping the hospitality sector back to full strength.

From the communication skills of front of house staff through to the kitchen porters, everyone needs to be compliant with the venue's chosen approach and know their role in delivering it effectively.

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To find out about our products and how we've helped businesses like yours prepare to re-open get in touch on:

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