



GUIDE TO CLEANING FOR COVID-19

By Bridget Gardner

A practical guide for operating cleaning services during the coronavirus pandemic, COVID-19.

Supported by a suite of essential templates.

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The Guide to Cleaning for COVID-19

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About the author

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Bridget is a frequent contributor to Inclean Magazine and conference presenter and is a specialist in best practice cleaning for sustainability, health and infection control.

About HPC Solutions

High Performance Cleaning Solutions Pty Ltd, trading as HPC Solutions, is a cleaning consultancy and training company, in Melbourne, Australia. Our mission is to keep people, environments and businesses healthy by empowering people to clean with care, skill and pride and to treat cleaning as important.

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INTRODUCTION

A novel (new) **coronavirus** was first recorded in late 2019 in China, and began to spread rapidly. The disease resulting from this coronavirus was named **COVID-19** by the World Health Organisation (WHO). The virus that causes COVID-19 is called **SARS-CoV-2**.

The WHO declared COVID-19 to be a pandemic on 12th March. As of the 12th August, there are over 20million cases globally with 741,238 deaths, and 27,713 cases with 316 deaths in Australia.

Our understanding of this coronavirus, such as how to kill it and prevent the spread of infection, is rapidly evolving. A lot of research is based on previous and similar SARS viruses.

What do we know about COVID-19?

COVID-19 is extremely infectious, we have no immunity, and there are no vaccines yet. While symptoms are often like a mild flu, it can cause deadly pneumonia and serious lung damage in elderly people and those with underlying respiratory and heart conditions.

It is spread via droplets of breath from infected people that can be inhaled if you are within 1-2 metres of that person and by touching surfaces that droplets and respiratory secretions land on.

If the conditions are right, it can remain infectious on inanimate surfaces for many days. In fact, other human coronaviruses have remained infectious for up to 9 days.

Why is cleaning and disinfection so important?

COVID-19 can be picked up from a contaminated surface onto our hands and cleaning tools, which can then spread to:

- other surfaces that we clean,
- other people that we touch, and
- our own bodies by touching our eyes, nose or eating if we don't wash our hands.

That's why thoroughly cleaning frequently touched surfaces is a vitally important part of preventing the spread of COVID-19 and keeping us all healthy, and the purpose of this Guide.

What are the risks and opportunities for cleaning companies?

The current coronavirus pandemic has caused massive disruption to business and the community. Many commercial and institutional facilities have closed while employees are working from home, or due to a sharp downturn in business.

While the commercial cleaning sector has been hit hard, the light commercial and domestic market is reeling. This crisis has caused pain and uncertainty for employers and employees alike.

But every crisis brings opportunity. Coronavirus has given the cleaning industry plenty of opportunities to offer enhanced sanitation and decontamination cleaning services.

Now cleaning services have a vitally important role to play in preventing a second wave of COVID-19, and helping the Australian community and economy get back to on track.

Every building needs a **COVIDSafe plan** before it can reopen. Effective, frequent cleaning is an integral part of that Plan and offers an opportunity to show the value of your services and skills.

About this guide

The **Guide to Cleaning for COVID-19** is a practical guide for operating cleaning services during the coronavirus pandemic, COVID-19. It is designed to help cleaning businesses operating in commercial and institutional buildings, to survive and thrive through the coronavirus pandemic.

Structure

This Guide is structured in three parts:

PART 1. UNDERSTAND THE RISKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. The risks to building occupants B. The risks to cleaning personnel C. The risks to business continuity
PART 2. PLAN YOUR SERVICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. The COVID-Safe Cleaning Plan B. Pandemic Risk Management Plan C. Plan COVID-19 cleaning services D. Manage your cleaning personnel
PART 3. CARRY OUT CLEANING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. SUPPLY: Choosing the right cleaning supplies B. PREPARE: Preparing your cleaning supplies C. CLEAN: Cleaning and disinfecting for COVID-19 D. MAINTAIN: Maintenance & disposal of supplies E. CHECK: Cleaning Performance Measuring

Templates

This Guide is supported with seven essential templates that will help you to plan, implement monitor your effective cleaning practices, and manage the risks of cleaning for COVID-19:

Templates	Section
 ❖ <i>HPCS-1. Risk Management Plan Template</i>	PART 2.B
 ❖ <i>HPCS-2. Procedure for Managing Cleaning Staff during a Pandemic</i>	PART 2.B
 ❖ <i>HPCS-3. High Touch Point Cleaning Protocols</i>	PART 2.C
 ❖ <i>HPCS-4. SOP for Cleaning and Disinfecting High Touch Points</i>	PART 3. A - E
 ❖ <i>HPCS-5. SOP for Coronavirus Decontamination Cleans</i>	PART 3. A - E
 ❖ <i>HPCS-6. COVID-Safe Cleaning Plan Template</i>	PART 2.A
 ❖ <i>HPCS-7. COVID-Safe Cleaning Checklist</i>	PART 3.E

Updates to this Guide

This is **Version 5** of the Guide to Cleaning for COVID-19.

This Guide is based on the most up-to-date information and advice available. As the pandemic situation evolves, new information comes to light, and Government guidelines and regulations change, we have been updating the Guide and Templates accordingly.

Important:

Some people who have purchased this Guide have not been receiving emails notifying them of their updates, due to SPAM checkers. To make sure you receive notifications of your **FREE** future updates and resources please save my email to your contacts: **bridget@hpcsolutions.com.au**

What has changed in version 5?

Version 5 contains the following amendments and changes:

Section	Amendments	Page
Part 2. Section B:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An explanation has been added to the Pandemic Risk Management Planning page about how to customise the template to each site 	21
Part 2. Section C:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new section about Physical Distancing on site has been added, and how to complete this section of the COVID-Safe Plan, which is supported with changes to the COVID-Safe Cleaning Plan Template. 	25-26
Part 2. Section D:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated information about how to prepare your cleaning staff for cleaning during a pandemic by teaching team leaders and managers to identify coronavirus symptoms 	33
Part 2. Section D:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added two sections to the Procedure for Managing Cleaning Staff during a Pandemic about physical distancing and personal hygiene and provided explanations in the Guide 	34
Part 2. Section D:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated information about Competency Training unit: HLTINFCOV001 - Comply with Infection Prevention and Control Policies & Procedures (COVID Clean Training); 	35
Part 2. Section D:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above, included the recommendation to nominate a worker to champion COVID Safe workplaces as a core business culture 	38
Part 3. Section E:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A lot more information has been added to the Clean Performance Measuring section as this is a common request now by managers. It includes a warning about the legality of making "30-day protection" promises and "COVID-free Building Certificates" 	68
Part 3. Section E:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new Template has been provided called the <i>COVID-Safe Cleaning Checklist</i>. The Guide explains how to use this valuable audit tool to score each site and provide reports to your clients. 	69
Part 3. Section E:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More information about Rapid ATP Testing and SARS-CoV-2 surface testing has been provided in this final section. 	71 - 73
A. Resources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A valuable resource has been added by VIC DHHS 	76






❖ [HPCS-Updates - Guide to Cleaning for COVID 19-V5.0 \(click icon to open\)](#)

PART 1. UNDERSTAND THE RISKS

❖ *The first part of this Guide is designed to help you to understand the risks involved in delivering cleaning services during this coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), so that you can plan your operations to protect your customers, staff and business.*

Part 1 will help you to identify and assess the risks to:

Building occupants	Cleaning teams	Your business
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section A: The risk to building occupants 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section B: The risk to cleaning personnel 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section C: The risk to business continuity

Why understanding the risks is so important

In times of crisis, it can be tempting to focus only on the main issue, in this case the risk of illness with COVID-19, at the expense of other less obvious or chronic risks.

For example, the way you treat the main risk can create secondary hazards, such as exposure to hazardous disinfectants. Other risks may be overlooked, such as the loss of business continuity when one of your supervisors becomes infected and your entire team must go into isolation.

Therefore it is critical that you conduct a thorough risk assessment of your cleaning service and all the people and aspects that may be affected by this coronavirus pandemic. Only then can you make decisions about how to prevent risks or how to mitigate them if they occur.

Take time out with your decision making team to read this guide and discuss how the risks and strategies relate to your business and the situations your clients and cleaning teams are facing.

The best way to respond to the pressure of the urgent requests, constantly shifting situations and the very real fear that your clients and cleaners are feeling, is by building a solid understanding of the threats you are facing.

Armed with this knowledge, you will be able to develop a clear, actionable and evidence-based plan for addressing each risk. As Australia opens back up for business, you will need a COVID-Safe Cleaning Plan that is appropriate to the different risk levels associated with either Decontamination Cleaning or Preventative Cleaning services.

Knowledge is the antidote to fear

A. RISK 1: Understand the risks to building occupants

❖ *This is the 1st Risk Category on your Pandemic Risk Management Plan.*

The main way that COVID-19 virus is being spread is via close contact with an infected person. It is typically transmitted via respiratory droplets, when a person coughs or sneezes.¹

Although not yet proven, health authorities agree that there is a risk that coronavirus can be transferred from viruses on surfaces and objects. People who touch a surface with coronavirus on it, can then infect themselves by then touching their mouths, nose or eyes.

Several studies conducted on the SARS-CoV-2 virus found that it can survive up to 24 hours on cardboard, cloth and wood, up to 2 days on glass, and 4 days on plastic and stainless-steel.² Previous studies of SARS viruses found they could last up to 9 days on metal, glass and plastic.³

That is why all health authorities advise that frequent cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces, along with washing hands, are important ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Frequently touched surfaces at most risk of spreading COVID-19

On May 26, Safe Work Australia released a new Fact Sheet called: **How to clean and disinfect your workplace - COVID-19. Recommended cleaning: Supplementary information.**⁴

This fact sheet states that “Any surfaces that are frequently touched should be prioritised for cleaning and disinfection... and surfaces which are visibly soiled (dirty) and which are used by multiple people.”

SWA also defines a frequently touched surface as a “surface that is touched multiple times each day, regardless of whether it is touched by the same person or different people. An infrequently touched surface is any surface that is not touched more than once each day.”

This infers that an office desk used by one person is deemed to be a frequently touched surface, even if there is very little risk of it being touched by another person.

When identifying and prioritising frequently touched surfaces for your **COVID-Safe Cleaning Plan**, the risk of transmission needs to be considered along with the cost and time to do so.

High Touch Points

HPC Solutions defines High Touch Points (HTPs) as “surfaces that are identified as being frequently touched by many hands and at risk of contaminating hands or food”. Such surfaces present a greater risk of spreading the virus than a desk which only one person occupies.

The most critical HTPs to clean and disinfect are those at most risk of becoming contaminated from multiple hands touching them, such as in public areas, entrances and access ways, in washrooms, or kitchens and eating areas where there is the added risk of consuming the virus.

Examples of critical HTPs per area are listed below:

General areas	Kitchen areas	Washroom areas
<input type="checkbox"/> Door handles / push plates	<input type="checkbox"/> Door, cupboard and drawer handles	<input type="checkbox"/> Door handles, locks and push plates
<input type="checkbox"/> Hand railings	<input type="checkbox"/> Tap handles	<input type="checkbox"/> Basin taps
<input type="checkbox"/> Lift buttons	<input type="checkbox"/> Drinking water buttons	<input type="checkbox"/> Basin benches
<input type="checkbox"/> Security key pads	<input type="checkbox"/> Fridge handles	<input type="checkbox"/> Soap dispenser buttons
<input type="checkbox"/> Sign-in touch screens	<input type="checkbox"/> Appliance handles, such as urns and jugs	<input type="checkbox"/> Hand dryer buttons
<input type="checkbox"/> Light switches	<input type="checkbox"/> Microwave oven buttons	<input type="checkbox"/> Toilet buttons
<input type="checkbox"/> Shared office equipment buttons (i.e. printers)	<input type="checkbox"/> Kitchen counter tops	<input type="checkbox"/> Toilet lid and seat front
<input type="checkbox"/> Remote controls	<input type="checkbox"/> Dining tables / benches	<input type="checkbox"/> Sanitary bin lids
<input type="checkbox"/> Meeting room tables	<input type="checkbox"/> Chair backs and arms	<input type="checkbox"/> Safety railings
<input type="checkbox"/> Meeting room chair arms and backs		

Which HTPs carry the highest risk of being infected?

High Touch Points in the following areas have an increased risk of being touched by infected hands, or of infecting hands that touch them, and must be cleaned and disinfected more frequently:

HTPs near the front door of buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entrances have a higher chance of being infected because far more hands touch them, and those hands may have recently touched surfaces in public areas, such as on public transport.
HTPs in populated spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spaces such as schools, universities and in corridors, receptions, break-out rooms and meeting rooms.
HTPs in kitchens and eating areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People may touch their food after touching contaminated surfaces and ingest the virus.
HTPs in washrooms and toilet cubicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Washroom surfaces that are touched by hands after using the toilet and <u>prior to being washed</u> could easily be contaminated as there is evidence that COVID-19 is shed in faecal matter.

Template 3 contains a set of charts called the **High Touch Point (HTP) Cleaning Protocols**. Refer to **Part 2.B. PLAN** for instructions on how to use them to prepare your COVIDSafe plan (p 25-26).



❖ [HPCS-3. High Touch Point Cleaning Protocols \(click icon to open\)](#)

REFERENCES

A. Resources

The following table contains the key Australian Health Authorities that have been referenced in this Guide, with advice and guidelines for cleaning during the coronavirus pandemic.

Govt. Department	Name	Source
National COVID-19 Coordination Commission (NCCC)	COVID Safe Plan	www.pmc.gov.au/nccc/resources/planning-tool-help-businesses-reopen-and-be-covidsafe
Australian Government Department of Health	Environmental cleaning and disinfection principles: COVID-19	www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/03/environmental-cleaning-and-disinfection-principles-for-covid-19.pdf
Australian Government Department of Health	Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) – Information for Employers.	www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/03/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-employers.pdf
Australian Government Department of Health	Coronavirus (COVID-19): Information about routine environmental cleaning and disinfection in the community	www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/03/coronavirus-covid-19-information-about-routine-environmental-cleaning-and-disinfection-in-the-community.pdf
Safe Work Australia	National COVID-19 safe workplace principles	www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/other-resources/national-covid-19-safe-workplace-principles
Safe Work Australia	COVID-19 Information for workplaces: Business resource kit	www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/collection/covid-19-resource-kit
Safe Work Australia	How to clean and disinfect your workplace - COVID-19	www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/how-clean-and-disinfect-your-workplace-covid-19
Safe Work Australia	COVID-19 Information for workplaces: Office Cleaning	www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/industry-information/office/cleaning
Safe Work Australia	Cleaning to prevent the spread of COVID-19: PDF Fact Sheet 26May20	www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/cleaning-prevent-spread-covid-19-fact-sheet
Safe Work Australia	How to clean and disinfect your workplace: Cleaning table	www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-05/cleaning-table-covid19-26May2020.pdf
Safe Work Australia	CHECKLIST: Cleaning	www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-04/COVID-19_Cleaning-Checklist.pdf
Safe Work Australia	CHECKLIST: Health, hygiene & facilities - COVID-19	www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/health-hygiene-facilities-checklist-covid-19
Safe Work Australia	Small business planning tool - COVID-19	www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/small-business-planning-tool-covid-19?tab=All
Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC)	Advice on reducing the potential risk of COVID-19 transmission in schools (24 April 2020).	www.health.gov.au/news/australian-health-protection-principal-committee-ahppc-advice-on-reducing-the-potential-risk-of-covid-19-transmission-in-schools
Aust. Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care	Sequence for putting on and removing PPE	www.safetyandquality.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-03/putting_on_and_removing_ppe_diagram_-_march_2020.pdf
Victorian Department of Health and Human Services	How to clean and disinfect after a COVID-19 case in the workplace: Information for cleaners, business owners and managers	www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/cleaning-and-disinfecting-reduce-covid-19-transmission-building-and-construction-sites

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3 Covid-19: How long does the coronavirus last on surfaces? Sourced: www.bbc.com/future/article/20200317-covid-19-how-long-does-the-coronavirus-last-on-surfaces .

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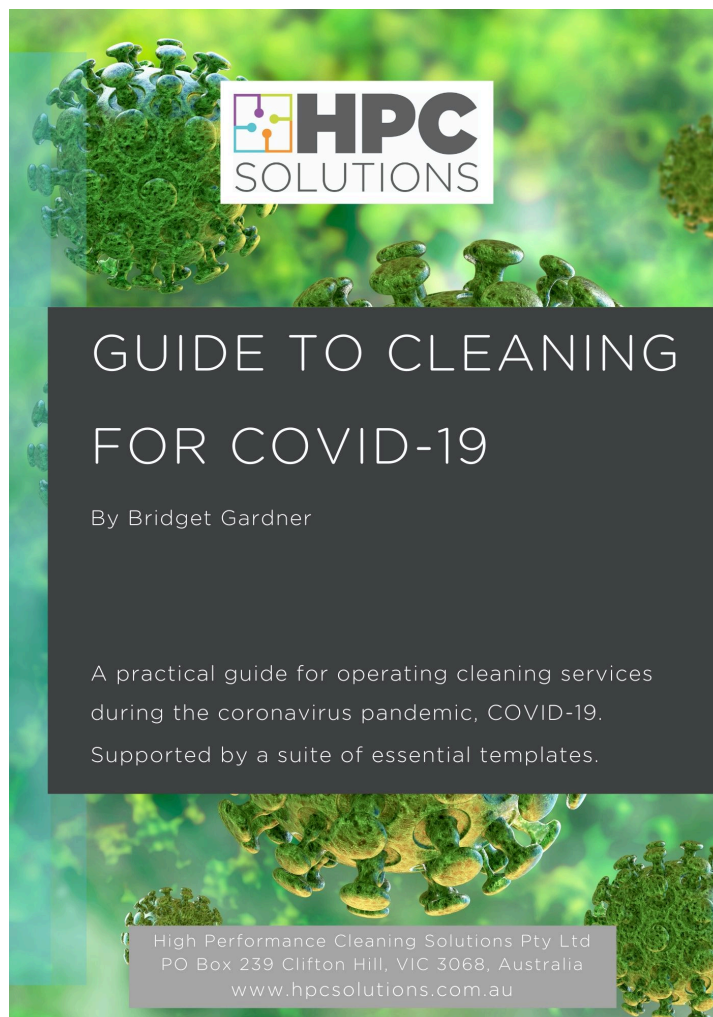
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