

Cleaning Churches during Covid-19

Version 1	Updated 26 June 2020	First Published
Version 2	Updated 30 June 2020	Updated Safe Use of Places of Worship link Added links about virus transmission, outdoor playgrounds and COSHH
Version 3	Updated 6 July 2020	Added links on TMCP's guidance on cleaning obligations
Version 4	Updated 14 July 2020	Added new link for CPO
Version 5	Updated 28 July 2020	Amended guidance about hand dryers
Version 6	Updated 18 Aug 2020	Added information about fogging machines and links for Scotland and Wales

Ensuring that the correct cleaning regimes are established is imperative to reducing the spread of Covid-19. These guidelines are designed to work in tandem with the Covid-19 Risk Assessment found on the www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/property/coronavirus-guidance-for-property/.

The term 'deep clean' refers to a more thorough cleaning than what happens throughout the day. If there are multiple people entering the building, then high contact areas such as door handles, light switches, bannisters, etc. should be regularly wiped down. Frequent cleaning and good hygiene are essential to reducing the risk of transmission as the virus can live on surfaces for up to 72 hours. The virus is transmitted via droplets projected when speaking and therefore, cleaning is not required in unused areas. For further information about how the virus is spread, click [here](#).

For more information on cleaning regimes, please refer to the HSE's guidance on [Cleaning to Reduce to the Spread of Covid-19](#).

The government has specified in [Safe Use of Places of Worship](#)¹ that sufficient time for cleaning must be allowed and thus churches will need to plan for adequate cleaning between groups. However, if there are 72 hours between groups using the building, then cleaning for Covid-19 is not required.

TMCP have produced further guidance on [Covid-19 Precautions](#), including cleaning obligations, for leases and licenses.

¹ In England - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july>

In Scotland - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-3-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship/>

In Wales - <https://gov.wales/guidance-reopening-places-worship-coronavirus-htm>

If there is an outdoor playground, the government has given this [guidance](#)².

If someone in the building tests positive for Covid-19, click [here](#)³ to view the special cleaning and disinfecting measures.

If the building is listed, you should review Historic England's [How to Clean Historic Surfaces](#) and speak to the [Conservation Officer](#) before cleaning delicate historic items.

CPO have offered the Methodist Church as [15% discount on PPE](#).

When re-opening the building for the first time, a deep clean for Covid-19 is not necessary but a normal clean is recommended. Please review the [Re-Opening a Building Checklist](#) for further information.

Cleaning and sanitising

1. Think about the common areas of the building that are likely to have areas that need regular cleaning such as reception areas, toilets, kitchens, stairs and worship areas.
2. Identify objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, such as door handles, light switches, bannisters, etc. and decide how frequently you clean them.
3. When receiving outside deliveries, you will need to decide what cleaning is needed and talk about how to make sure it is done.

Making cleaning easier and reducing the need to clean

1. Think about what you can do to reduce the need to clean or to make cleaning easier and more effective. You may wish to restrict access to certain areas of the building.
2. Keeping surfaces clear of objects makes it easier to clean and reduces the number of things which can become contaminated.
3. Put in place 'clean as you use systems' for high contact areas to keep up with cleaning requirements.
4. You may wish to prop open doors (taking fire safety and security issues into consideration) and restrict access to certain parts of the building to reduce cleaning and aid with ventilation of fresh air.

² In England - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-playgrounds-and-outdoor-gyms/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-playgrounds-and-outdoor-gyms>

In Scotland - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-3-staying-safe-and-protecting-others/pages/sports-culture-and-leisure-activities/#Exercise and activity>

In Wales - <https://gov.wales/reopening-childrens-playgrounds-and-outdoor-play-areas-coronavirus-html>

³ In England and Wales - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

In Scotland - https://hpspubsrepo.blob.core.windows.net/hps-website/nss/2973/documents/1_covid-19-guidance-for-non-healthcare-settings.pdf

Who will do the cleaning and when?

1. Decide if the current cleaning arrangements are enough to ensure adequate cleaning to reduce the spread of the virus. You may choose different levels of cleaning for different areas. Deep cleaning (more thorough cleaning) in between groups using the church and then supplementary cleaning, e.g. wiping high contact surfaces when the church is in use.
2. Provide specific instructions (or a training session) to those doing the cleaning to ensure they know what to clean and how to make it effective. This does not need to a specialist company but anyone who is vulnerable or shielding should avoid cleaning. The cleaning products used normally are sufficient for cleaning, unless a case of Covid-19 has been confirmed.
3. Set clear guidance on how to handle and store cleaning materials/products safely ([COSHH Guidelines](#)) and when cleaning procedures need to be followed.
4. Signs around the building can be a good way of letting people know what they need to do to keep it clean and sanitised.
5. If people cannot clean straight after touching surfaces, then provide hand sanitiser.
6. For higher-risk cleaning areas, such as toilets, you will need to ensure people know what to do to protect themselves. If regular cleaning is not possible, you could consider closing off the toilets.
7. Setting clear guidance and line of responsibility for the use of kitchen and toilet facilities to make sure they are kept clean. The government's guidance on [Food Preparation during Covid-19](#) should be followed.
8. Cleaning soft furnishings - current information suggests that unless fabrics have been soiled, then these can be cleaned with a vacuum cleaner.
9. The use of fogging machines are permitted and more information can be found on HSE's [Disinfecting premises using Fog, Mist, Vapour or UV Systems](#). If a fogging machine is used, then care must be taken to seal the room so that the particles are not inhaled. As well, if a building is listed or considered to be a heritage building, the use of fogging machines is discouraged in order to prevent damage to the internal furnishings⁴.

Read more information about cleaning from the links below on the Safe Use of Places of Worship and Working Safely :

⁴ <https://historicengland.org.uk/coronavirus/historic-places/cleaning-disinfecting-historic-surfaces/>

- In England - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july> and <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>
- In Scotland - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-3-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship/> and <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-returning-to-work/pages/employers/>
- In Wales - <https://gov.wales/guidance-reopening-places-worship-coronavirus-html> and <https://gov.wales/keep-wales-safe-work>

Good Hygiene

You need to think about:

1. Ensuring there is handwashing facilities that provide running water, soap and paper towels and reminding to wash regularly for 20 seconds.
2. Providing handwashing facilities or hand sanitiser at entry and exit points . The government states that people should be able to wash their hands as they arrive and leave.
3. Frequently wipe down hand dryers. When using paper towels, bins should have liners and should be emptied frequently to safely dispose of waste.
4. Providing hand sanitiser in multiple areas in addition to washing facilities.
5. Providing tissues throughout the building.
6. Setting clear guidance for the cleaning of toilets and kitchen facilities to make sure they are kept clean.
7. Using signs and posters to increase awareness of good handwashing technique – reminding those in the building to catch coughs and sneezes in tissues and to avoid touching face, eyes, nose or mouth with unclean hands. Signs can be ordered from [CPO](#) or other recommendations include:
 - a. [NHS Hand-Washing Technique](#)
 - b. [Hand-Washing Technique \(child version\)](#)
 - c. [DoH Wash Your Hands](#)
 - d. [Follow Catch it, Bin it, Kill it](#)
 - e. [Cover Coughs and Sneezes \(child version\)](#)
 - f. [Compliance with Covid-19 Guidance \(revised\)](#)

Use of Hand Sanitisers containing alcohol on Church Premises

Hand sanitisers with very high alcohol content could be used as intoxicants, therefore they should be kept in an accessible but safe place, particularly away from young children, as the

medical effects of this could lead to hospitalisation. Managing Trustees may be concerned that the potential use of alcoholic products on Methodist premises may be in breach of Standing Orders. It is true that the consumption of alcohol in this way on Methodist premises would be a breach of SO922. The intentions behind SO922 when it was drafted was to reduce the harm to society through alcohol abuse. Therefore, in the context for which this product should be used i.e. as a hand sanitiser, this does not breach Standing Orders and is therefore acceptable to have on Methodist premises.