

**Part of  
The Revised Healthcare  
Cleaning Manual**

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## Welcome to the Revised Healthcare Cleaning Manual

The Revised Healthcare Cleaning Manual has been designed to help every NHS Trust meet its obligation to aid the delivery of high-quality, effective and safe healthcare in clean premises that support the control of healthcare associated infections and make a positive contribution to healthcare outcomes.

The Revised Healthcare Cleaning Manual is intended as a resource for the Trust Board member or senior manager with responsibility for cleanliness and for all managers and staff with responsibilities for cleaning. The Manual is applicable to all healthcare settings including hospitals, ambulances and primary care.

The aim of the Manual is to provide guidance on cleaning techniques and best practice advice on defining responsibilities, scheduling work, measuring outcomes, reporting and driving improvements.

It is anticipated that healthcare providers will respond to the publication of this Manual by reviewing existing policies and practice relating to cleanliness.

This Manual is available for download from <http://www.npsa.nhs.uk/cleaning>

## Foreword

The cleanliness of healthcare premises is an important component in the provision of clean safe care. The NHS Constitution clearly sets out that patients have a right to be treated in an organisation that meets the required levels of safety and quality. The NHS has further pledged that services will be provided in a clean and safe environment that is fit for purpose and based on national best practice. Whilst there have been significant improvements in the cleanliness of our healthcare premises, there is still room for improvement.

The Care Quality Commission will continue the inspection programme to ensure that healthcare providers are meeting the requirements of regulation with respect to healthcare associated infections. In order to meet these requirements, healthcare providers will be expected to provide and maintain a clean and appropriate environment that facilitates the prevention and control of healthcare associated infection. Following the guidance in this manual may be of assistance in providing assurance that a healthcare provider meets these requirements.

This guidance should be used as a starting point from which practitioners and managers can develop their own local environmental cleanliness policies. When read in conjunction with the National Specifications for Cleanliness, this guidance can help healthcare providers identify standards of cleanliness and what systems and processes they need to put in place to deliver and monitor those standards.

The National Patient Safety Agency commissioned the Association of Healthcare Cleaning Professionals to lead the review of this Manual and revise the guidance to reflect the modern NHS. We have worked with a variety of stakeholders with expertise in cleaning, infection control, nursing and emergency care. We are grateful to all those involved in the revision of this guidance for providing their expertise, time and commitment to this work.

**Martin Fletcher**

Chief Executive

National Patient Safety Agency

## 3.5 Model guidance on Health and Safety for staff with cleaning duties

This section provides an example of model guidance that may be tailored to suit the needs of the healthcare provider.

Health and Safety guide for cleaning staff

### a. Personal safety

Every employee must accept responsibility for his or her personal safety. Failure to comply with instructions, with written procedures, or with your training will increase the risk of you causing an accident which harms yourself or someone else. You have a responsibility to co-operate with your employer by working safely and efficiently.

Always ensure that you:

- Take reasonable precautions to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of yourself and others who may be affected by your work;
- Observe all health and safety rules and procedures laid down by your employer;
- Always use any health and safety equipment that your employer provides you with;
- Do not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything that is provided in the interest of health and safety;
- Report any faulty equipment to your supervisor without delay;
- Alert your supervisor without delay if you notice a potential hazard;
- Report all incidents which may lead to injury, completing an accident form in line with your employer's policy;
- Do not attempt any task for which you do not have properly signed training.

### b. General Health and Safety rules:

- Work in a controlled and systematic way, do not rush or allow yourself to become distracted;
- Walk between tasks, do not run;
- Use only authorised access and exit routes into buildings, wards and departments;
- Always lift and move items in accordance with your manual handling training;
- Keep work areas tidy, and tidy up as you work.

### c. Using electrical equipment:

- Check equipment before and after use for damage or wear which might potentially be dangerous, including breaks or cracks on the plug or cable. Additionally, check that there is a valid Portable Appliance Test (PAT) notice in place on any electrical equipment to be used. Any damaged or untested equipment should be reported immediately to a supervisor, who will ensure that the equipment is labelled as unfit for purpose and removed from use.
- When using electrical equipment, plan your work to ensure that the cable will always be behind the machine. Ensure that the switch is in the "off" position before plugging machinery into a wall socket. Always unplug machinery before changing fittings or settings.
- Ensure hands are dry when plugging or unplugging electrical machinery.
- When plugging a machine into an electric socket, make sure the switch is in the off position.
- Always make sure to plug the machine into a free plug socket. If none are available, ask the person in charge before unplugging any other machinery.
- The electrical cable must never be draped over your shoulder or over the handle of the machine while you are working.

- Do not adjust or change the fittings on the machine when it is plugged in.
- Never use a piece of electrical equipment unless you have signed training in its use.
- Never leave unattended machinery attached to a power source.
- Never leave machinery unattended where it could be a source of danger to others.
- Should the machine switch off automatically, stop work and inform your supervisor.
- Water or steam should not be used directly on electrical sockets. If the risk assessment identifies this potential hazard, then the sockets should be made safe before the work commences.
- If using steam, care must be taken at all times to keep the high pressure nozzle away from contact with yourself or others.
- Excess steam may activate fire detectors; discharge steam only when cleaning.

**d. Guidance related to cleaning activities:**

- Refer to the work schedule and identify the task to be performed.
- Identify the type of area in which cleaning is to be performed and select the correct colour-coded equipment for the task, by reference to the national colour-coding system.
- Prepare cleaning solutions in strict accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and with your training. If using spray-bottles, ensure that these are clearly labelled and are thoroughly cleaned before refilling. Do not mix chemicals and only use a cleaning product provided by your employer.
- Plan your work and where necessary temporarily move any items that might obstruct you to a new, safe location.
- Use hazard signs to warn other users of the area in which you are carrying out a cleaning task.
- After use, all equipment should be left clean, dry and tidy in a secure storage area, segregated according to colour-coding where appropriate.
- Refer to risk assessment to determine whether personal protective equipment should be worn, or other additional precautions are necessary.
- Follow the method statement and your training when performing a cleaning task.

**e. Clothing, jewellery and personal hygiene:**

- Loose fitting clothes and jewellery may become caught in machinery and therefore must be avoided. Depending upon the nature of the task, a plain wedding band may be worn. If you wish to wear jewellery for religious, health or other reasons, you should seek the advice of your supervisor before commencing work. Long hair should be tied up off the collar.
- Good personal hygiene plays an important role in health and safety at work. Refer to your Trust policy for guidance on acceptable standards.

**f. Safe manual handling**

Training should be given in the correct method of lifting, carrying and pushing and pulling. If you develop a medical problem that would place you at risk when carrying out manual handling, you should alert your supervisor who should carry out a risk assessment. It is advisable to alert your supervisor if you become pregnant so that a personal risk assessment can be carried out.

