



Covid-19

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Vacation Rental Housekeeping Professionals (VRHP) and the Vacation Rental Management Association (VRMA) are recommending that existing cleaning programs be augmented to include even more rigorous sanitization and disinfection protocols. These recommendations are below.

All vacation rental field staff/housekeepers/technicians or other employees should complete training regarding proper and safe cleaning techniques and property security. Teams need to understand how to safely use chemical products (such as germicides used to clean bathrooms) and dispose of trash, cleaning supplies, and biohazards appropriately.

## COVID-19, Disinfection, and Sanitization

- Cleaning is defined by the CDC as “the removal of germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces. It does not kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection.”
- Disinfection is a separate step that should come *after* If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned prior to disinfection.
- Disinfection vs. Sanitization: These two activities are not the same. Sanitizing refers to reducing the number of germs to a safe level by cleaning. Disinfecting refers to killing nearly 100% of germs on surfaces or objects, according to the CDC. It is important to note that when a surface has been disinfected, if there are virus particles in the air, those particles may settle on the newly cleaned surface. This means that the surface is now in a sanitized state, not a disinfected state. This concept holds true, regardless of whether we are talking about the COVID-19 virus or other viruses, bacteria, dust, or other particles. For this reason, VRHP/VRMA recommends being careful with advertising that properties are truly “100% disinfected” and suggests language instead that says that your company is using disinfecting products and/or that properties have been through a disinfection process.
- Properly dispose of gloves and use hand sanitizer when finished and BEFORE entering your vehicle and especially before touching the steering wheel.

- All field staff should continue proper hand washing protocols throughout the day and should avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands. The CDC handwashing guidance is at: <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>.

## Cleaning and Inspections

- Extra cleaning time should be allocated to existing turnover timeframes. How much time is a business decision for each company. The two major factors in how much time is needed are:
  - The amount of time required to sanitize/disinfect high-touch areas that may not have previously been rigorously cleaned on every turn.
  - Allowing a certain amount of time for the nebulized virus particles to settle out of the air.

As part of the guest departure duties, if guests can be asked to turn on all ceiling fans and/or HVAC fans, that would be ideal. When the cleaner or inspector arrives, they can open a few windows to air property out if fan use is not possible. Make sure windows are closed when staff leave the property.

## Soft Surfaces and Upholstery

- To date, there is limited information regarding how long the COVID-19 virus can live on fabric or other soft surfaces.
- Most soft surfaces (such as upholstery) can only be sanitized.
- Using a pressurized pump sprayer to distribute a sanitizing product across all soft surfaces is best. Be sure to know the limitations of your product and that it is safe to use on the soft goods in the property.

## Linens and Bedding

- Linens and bedding should not be shaken, so as not to disperse viral particles into the air.
- There are multiple ways that dirty linen can be removed from the property and placed in a vehicle. A few ways that VRHP/VRMA recommends are:
  - Dirty linens can be placed into a dissolvable laundry bag. The dissolvable bag can then be tied closed and placed inside your regular linen bag or large plastic trash or contractor bag. Once at the laundry, the dissolvable bag can be removed from the regular plastic bag and placed directly in the washing machine. The regular trash bag can be recycled.
  - Linens could be placed in a plastic trash or contractor bag, and then that bag can then be tied closed and placed inside your regular linen bag.
  - Linens could be placed in your regular linen bag, closed, and then encased in a plastic trash or contractor bag.

- A disinfecting product that is approved for soft surfaces and fabrics may be applied to bagged dirty linens, if desired.
- The housekeeper should remove gloves (safely, as per guidelines) after removing the dirty linen and securing them in bags. Hand sanitizer should be applied and fresh gloves put on before putting the clean linen on the bed.
- Ensure that all pillows have pillow protectors on them and the mattress has a mattress pad covering it. These items could be changed as often as needed or as seems reasonable.
- There are different ways to handle blankets, comforters, or other top-layer bedding.
  - Blankets/comforters should ideally be removed for laundering and replaced with a freshly washed item.
  - Blankets/comforters could also be triple sheeted with freshly laundered sheets.
  - Blankets/comforters could also be covered with a freshly washed duvet cover as an alternative.
- Linens and bedding should be professionally laundered, at the correct temperatures and with the correct chemical chemistry for proper cleaning and sanitization. If you only have the option to launder in the property, extra time will be required as a longer dry time at the highest setting the linen will allow is required. Be aware, fabrics that require a low temperature are not going to be sanitized.

## Trash Removal

- For both in-property trash gathering or outside trash in container collection and removal:
  - Gloves and masks should be worn at all times.
  - When picking up trash one should always be aware of sharps and jagged pieces of glass or metal that could cut the individual as they are carrying the bag.
  - One should never use their hand to push “compact” the trash bags in the trash bin so more bags can be added. This should always be done with an engineering device such as a stick, shovel, rake, etc.
  - Use a disinfecting product on the trash barrel or bin and place a fresh liner or bag inside.

Consider placing a “This property has been properly cleaned and sanitized for your arrival” door hanger on the front door or put other signage in the property.