



# CORONAVIRUS ADVICE FOR THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

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Coronavirus or COVID-19 as it is now known is a respiratory illness which has caused many infections and deaths not only in China, where it originated, but also in other countries around the world. As this is a new disease, we are still learning about it, and so issues such as how long the incubation period could be are uncertain.

Viruses such as flu have been found to survive on surfaces for up to 2 days. People may be carriers of coronavirus and may be in the incubation period where they are not yet showing symptoms but could be shedding the virus, which is why it is appearing in some countries where there is not a known source.

Whilst at time of writing the number of confirmed cases in the UK is low, by being prepared, we could help to reduce the risks if the numbers begin to rise. As the incubation period may be at least 14 days, our statistics may be behind, and we don't prevention measures now may pay dividends.

The good news is that preventive measures are similar to those of other respiratory disease and rely on good basic general and personal hygiene to stop the virus entering the body, which is why the likely routes of transmission need to be considered.

## Know the routes of transmission

- Direct contact to face – eyes, nose from droplets spraying from an infected person onto another person
- Contamination via droplets from sneezing and coughing landing on surfaces and then transferring via hands on to eyes and nose
- Contamination to hands from sneezing or coughing and then transfer to others (handshakes) or on to hand contact surfaces to be picked up by others by their hands and transferred to their eyes or nose

## Be prepared

- It is believed that Coronavirus is infective during the 14-day incubation period, so you could be carrying it without having any symptoms and wouldn't know; others you are in contact with may also be carrying the virus without any symptoms and could be infectious.
- Taking preventive measures means assuming that it is around and taking action accordingly. It is not a waste of time and is actually very cheap to implement the most effective measures, because these involve firstly washing your hands at critical times and second keeping dirty hands away from your face.
- Because the precautions for this virus are pretty much the same as for any respiratory virus, lessons learned may reduce the risk of getting other flu and cold viruses anyway, so it is not a waste of time to instil some good habits.

## Shutting the door on the virus - wash your hands or use hand gel immediately on arrival at work and on arrival at home: "destination hand washing"

- First and foremost, ask all staff arriving at work to wash their hands immediately upon arrival. You could put up a notice to remind them, at the entrance. Any security people at reception could remind everyone to wash their hands or use a hand gel. That way any virus particles picked up on the way to work are removed before they can be spread to others either via direct contact (shaking hands) or by touching hand contact surfaces (door handles, tables, kettle handles, kitchen equipment etc.)
- Hand gel, if used needs to be anti-viral and the higher the alcohol content, generally the better it is (over 62% is recommended). Check the labels to ensure that they are effective. Gels are a good additional resource in the workplace and could be positioned to encourage use.
- Also advise everyone to wash their hands as soon as they get home from shopping or work, particularly if they have travelled on public transport.

## How staff can protect themselves

- Keep your hands away from your face, particularly your eyes and nose
  - Your hands can pick up virus particles on any surface that is contaminated – anywhere where an infected person may have touched, or where someone has unwittingly transferred the virus from one contaminated surface to another.
  - NEVER touch your eyes or inside your nose unless you have just washed your hands.
- Don't shake hands
- Try to avoid crowded places if possible
- Turn away from people on public transport if you can, particularly if they are coughing or sneezing

## Advice for hospitality staff

- If staff are serving customers, whilst at the moment there is no advice to wear masks, normal precautions should be taken to improve handwashing at key times.
- The most important thing is to remember the routes of transmission, and to take precautions at key moments. If it is easier, in terms of operation, hand gel can be used on visibly clean hands.

### Hand washing times

- On arrival at work
- On entering the kitchen
- After clearing a table
- After touching anything that guests may have contaminated
- After touching hand contact surfaces such as handrails, door handles
- Always after using the toilet or going into the toilet areas
- After cleaning
- After cleaning hotel rooms and touching bedding and towels
- After doing any laundry

### Disinfection times

- In the catering or hotel office, many people could be sharing the phone, keyboard, mouse, and the desk.
- Disinfect these before you sit down using an antimicrobial wipe that has anti-viral properties – look on the label (leave these on the desk). As coronavirus is new, tests have not been done on this yet, but the next best thing is to use those products that claim to kill flu and cold viruses.

## Protecting others

- Always sneeze or cough into the crook of your arm to prevent your hands becoming contaminated
- If you use a tissue, bin it immediately, and don't leave around on surfaces. Wash your hands or use hand gel afterwards
- If anyone has flu symptoms such as cough, sneezing, fever, shortness of breath they should not come to work, and if concerned should dial 111 and ask for advice, before going to a GP surgery or chemist.

## Contingency Planning

- Self-isolation will affect labour and should be considered
- Fit staff may need to be prepared to be on standby for extra rotas

## Laundry

- Uniform should be washed at temperatures above 60°C or a laundry sanitizing agent used if the fabrics can't be washed at such a temperature.
- There is more control if laundry is carried out in-house or professionally, rather than staff taking it home.
- Uniform must not be worn on the way to work as it could become contaminated

## Face masks

At the moment there is a lot of discussion about how effective these are, and we should await direction from Public Health England about when it may be appropriate for masks to be worn.

If masks are worn, then care needs to be taken not to contaminate yourself when putting them on, or when adjusting them. Remember – hands are the main route of transmission, so you need to wash hands before putting the mask on and if you take it off and replace it, then make sure you haven't contaminated it in the meantime – because it fits directly on the face – a route of transmission.

## Training

**Training** should be given to ensure that all staff understand the risks, and this need not take long but should include details on route of transmission and the importance of hand washing at key times.

## Menus

**Menus** and other items such as hotel information packs that are used between guests could be a route of transmission, so consider using digital versions, wipe-clean or single use items at this time.

## **Coronavirus cases associated with your business**

If there is an infection relating to your premises, you will be given specific advice on how to work with the health professionals.

# **ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION FOR HOTELS**

Guests could be carrying the virus and may not know about it and may also arrive having picked it up on their hands during travelling.

## **Reception**

- Have sanitizer for guests to use on the desk
- Make sure all reception staff have access to sanitizer behind the desk so that they can use this between serving guests
- If staff help guests with luggage, they should wash their hands or use a hand gel afterwards.

## **Housekeeping**

- Housekeeping staff could be at risk from picking up the virus left on hand contact surfaces in bedrooms, on linen and towels.
- Hand contact surfaces should be sanitized using a chemical that is effective against respiratory viruses as well as bacteria. You may already have a check list that includes the following:
  - Bedside tables
  - Remote control
  - Taps
  - Flush handles
  - Door handles – inside and out
  - Hair dryer handles
  - Mini bar handle
  - Kettle handle
  - Ideally glasses and crockery should be removed and washed in a dishwasher not the room sink.
  - Linen and bedding should be bagged before leaving the bedroom to reduce any risk of transmission in the corridor
  - It is critical that staff protect themselves by hand washing immediately after cleaning each room or use a sanitizing hand gel.

## **More information:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/covid-19-guidance-for-non-clinical-settings-and-the-public>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-covid-19>

<http://www.ifh-homehygiene.org/factsheet/wuhan-coronavirus-infection---what-you-can-do-protect-yourself-against-infection---and-how>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-information-for-the-public>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/common-questions/>

[UKH and the Textile Services Association guidance on how to manage linen laundries](#)

[UKH and the Textile Services Association guidance on how to manage linen in hotels](#)

[ACAS employment guidance](#)

<https://www.ukhospitality.org.uk/coronavirus>

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