



Cleaning Terms

In response to many enquiries regarding cleaning applications, processes, and procedures the British Cleaning Council have compiled the following information as a guide to ensure informed decisions are made when cleaning in COVID-19 situations or preparing to return to safe spaces and healthy environments.

Social media, publications and indeed the general public, are fascinated with the term 'decontamination' although this term is being linked to numerous other terms such as 'fogging', 'misting', 'spraying', 'fumigation' and 'bug-bombing' with insufficient attention to the clear need to engage a two-stage process which is cleaning and disinfecting.

In order for surface decontamination to be achieved the first stage is for the soil to be removed - known as cleaning, and the second stage is for the pathogenic micro-organisms to be removed - known as disinfecting.

When cleaning within Health Care Establishments process and product guidance will be detailed in the Cleaning and Disinfecting policy. Standard operating procedures should be referenced in conjunction with information from Public Health England - PHE and the World Health Organisation - WHO. It must also be noted that several other cleaning terms not covered in this guidance paper are used in Health Care Environments

When undertaking cleaning services in commercial environments.

This is led by the customer requirements usually by means of a cleaning specification. Cleaning specifications are broadly divided into 2 types. Input cleaning specifications and Output cleaning specifications. The requirements of each are frequency driven in different ways. Neither type of specification specifies the cleaning requirements in terms of chemicals, materials or equipment. The assumption of the client is that the cleaning organisation will deploy the most economical and efficient methods available. This obviously is not always the case the old adage of buyer beware tends to be put to one side until there is a service delivery problem.

Without exception it is essential that a current robust risk assessment is designed acknowledging the various environmental factors that may be encountered. However, the risk must be monitored frequently in line with emerging guidance, changing landscapes and trends enabling the required adaptations to be embedded.

When engaging external providers to carry out specialist cleaning/disinfecting activity it is important to review their credentials in terms of:

- Reputation and Credibility
- Operator Training
- Credibility of the product intended for use, preferably that which has undergone efficacy testing and has a unique EN number
- Result evaluation process – how is the outcome measured?

Terms	Definition	Outcome	Evidence based
Cleaning	The removal of soil followed by safe disposal	Prepares surface for disinfection if required	If cleaning operatives are trained and provided with appropriate cleaning equipment and soil removal product, the process is safe and efficient
Enhanced Cleaning	Where the frequency of cleaning has been increased to support the reduction of a specific or contamination problem. Sanitary areas and touch points are the priority	Areas are cleaned more often therefore reducing the risk factor associated with cross contamination.	Product knowledge is essential If cleaning operatives are trained and provided with appropriate cleaning equipment and soil removal product, the process is safe and efficient Colour coded equipment disposable cloths and mops are recommended. Spent solutions disposed of as contaminated waste. All waste matter bagged and disposed of in line with contaminated waste policy
Disinfecting	The reduction of micro-organisms to safe levels	Renders the surface safe through the reduction of micro-organisms	Product knowledge and contact time is crucial. If cleaning operatives are trained the process is safe and efficient. Not effective against bacterial spores.
Decontamination	Cleansing an object or substance to remove contaminants such as micro-organisms	Involves cleaning and disinfecting. Assists in reducing cross-contamination when undertaken methodically.	Product knowledge and contact time is crucial. If cleaning operatives are trained and provided with appropriate cleaning equipment and soil

			removal product, the process is safe and efficient
'Deep Cleaning'	The removal of soil accumulations	Renders surfaces free from soil build up however the surface is not disinfected.	Product knowledge and contact time is crucial. If cleaning operatives are trained and provided with appropriate cleaning equipment and soil removal product, the process is safe and efficient
Periodic Cleaning	Non-routine cleaning where access may be difficult	Scheduled cleaning maintenance to support and preserve longevity of surfaces fixtures and fittings.	Manual handling training vital since items will be moved Product knowledge and contact time is crucial. If cleaning operatives are trained and provided with appropriate cleaning equipment and soil removal product, the process is safe and efficient
Process	Definition	Outcome	Evidence based
<i>For all of the following processes it is recommended that a site-based risk assessment is undertaken prior to starting the task and that manufacturer's operating instructions must be observed.</i>			
Spraying	The dispersion of liquid based fungicides, pesticides, chemicals	For best results, should follow thorough cleaning	Inhalation concerns as droplets vaporise. Residues may impact on fixtures and fittings. Environmental impacts must be considered. Trained cleaning operatives are essential to ensure the process is safe and efficient.
Misting	A condensed vapour settling in fine droplets on a surface	For best results, should follow thorough cleaning	Inhalation concerns as droplets vaporise. Residues may impact on fixtures and fittings. Environmental impacts must be considered.

			Trained cleaning operatives are essential to ensure the process is safe and efficient.
Fumigation	Reduces micro-biological agents largely used where micro-biological cleanliness is required	For best results, fumigation should follow thorough cleaning	Trained operators required to carry out the process. The fumigation process can have consequences if inhaled as the many substances used are extremely toxic. After the process, the area requires airing and a thorough after-clean is recommended. Environmental impacts must be considered.
Phase Fogging	A fine spray of chemical solution, used as a means of sanitising surfaces used in advance of cleaning then again after cleaning	First phase 1 is suggested as preparing the area for the cleaning team to enter safely. Area is then cleaned Phase 3	Room should be sealed. May be out of action for a period. Environmental impacts must be considered Process takes a much longer period. Trained cleaning operatives are essential to ensure the process is safe and efficient.
Fogging - Dry	Preferred where electrical equipment is in place. Room is filled with a mist of ultrafine droplets that do not settle easily on surfaces.	For best results, should follow thorough cleaning	Room should be sealed. May be out of action for a period of time. Environmental impacts must be considered. Trained cleaning operatives are essential to ensure the process is safe and efficient.

<p>Ultraviolet Light</p>	<p>Ultraviolet germicidal irradiation (UVGI) is a disinfection method that uses short wavelength ultraviolet light to kill or inactivate microorganisms by destroying nucleic acids and disrupting their DNA, leaving them unable to regenerate vital cellular functions. UVGI is used in a variety of applications, such as food, air, and water purification.</p>	<p>The UV light must fall directly on a surface to disinfect effectively.</p>	<p>If a UVC Robot is used to irradiate space with UV light the room must be clear of all Human and animal life forms. It will be 10 to 20 minutes before the room can be entered again. Trained cleaning operatives are essential to ensure the process is safe and efficient.</p>
<p>Steam Cleaning</p>	<p>Water is heated past the boiling point and forced out as pressurised steam through a nozzle, brush, or other attachment. The vapour loosens dirt and kills dust mites, mould, other allergens, and some harmful bacteria. No suction is required, since the high-heat moisture dries quickly.</p>	<p>For best results correct equipment, temperatures and manufactures training are required.</p>	<p>Product knowledge and contact time is crucial. Electrical sockets and electrical items and smoke detectors must be protected. Trained cleaning operatives are essential to ensure the process is safe and efficient.</p>
<p>Thermal Disinfection</p>	<p>Thermal disinfection is a method of disinfection which relies on moist/dry heat to kill bacteria and viruses by exposure to a specific temperature for a set amount of time. The high-temperature Thermal Disinfection process can destroy the proteins in viruses and bacteria and render them as dead or inert.</p>	<p>For best results, should be followed by thorough cleaning.</p>	<p>Room should be sealed. May be out of action for a period. Environmental impacts are minimal Process takes a much longer period e.g. an average hotel rooms treatment will take 5 to 6 hours to complete. Trained cleaning operatives are essential to ensure the process is safe and efficient.</p>

