

Advice to the Food Industry on the Control of SARS-CoV-2 and its Associated Disease, COVID 19

This is an update from Holchem on COVID-19 and is intended to provide guidance based on Q&As and feedback that we have had with our customers



COVID-19

SARS-CoV-2 and the coronavirus disease associated with it, known as COVID-19, is described in detail on the UK Government's website:

www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public

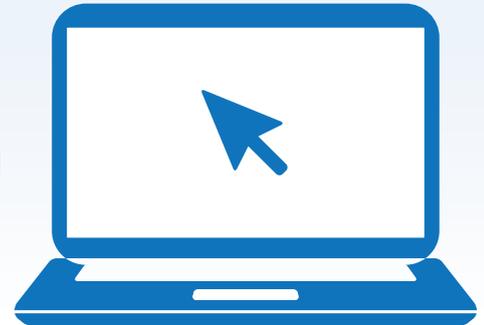
and the Irish Republic's website:

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/coronavirus.html>

(internationally) the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control:

www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/novel-coronavirus-china

and these should always be the default reference sources as appropriate.



The basis for COVID-19 control has not fundamentally changed and is associated with

- Remaining 2m apart from other people to protect from touching and cough droplets
- Frequent handwashing
- Good personal hygiene practices in relation to sneezing - "catch it - bin it - kill it"

Holchem have now produced a range of posters that can be displayed around sites to help with these messages. They can be downloaded for self-printing from our website

www.holchem.co.uk/media-centre/covid-19-posters/.

Transmission by Foods

There is still no real evidence that COVID-19 is transmitted via food or food packaging. Please see advice from - Europe:

www.efsa.europa.eu/en/news/coronavirus-no-evidence-food-source-or-transmission-route

England:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-food-businesses/guidance-for-food-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19

Transmission by Foods

Scotland:

www.foodstandards.gov.scot/consumers/food-safety/coronavirus

and Industry:

www.fooddrinkeurope.eu/uploads/statements_documents/FoodDrinkEurope_QA_-_Covid-19.pdf

Essentially this means that your existing, standard, routine cleaning practices (to remove food soils) and disinfection (to control bacterial pathogens) should continue to be used, without change.

Site Decontamination

There may be occasions when you need to decontaminate food production or ancillary areas if operatives who go on sick leave are subsequently tested positive for COVID-19. Advice on decontamination can be found at:

www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Environmental-persistence-of-SARS_CoV_2-virus-Options-for-cleaning2020-03-26_0.pdf

Holchem have interpreted this guidance into two generic CICs, for food processing and ancillary areas, which can be accessed via:-

www.holchem.co.uk/media-centre/covid-19-update/

Hand Hygiene Practice



Hand Washing

Frequent hand washing remains the best way to control COVID-19 transmission and the food industry already have excellent washroom areas to facilitate this. A video on hand washing can be accessed via:

www.holchem.co.uk/media-centre/handwashing/

However, there may be many surfaces that operatives could touch, post hand washing, that may be contaminated, particularly in the washroom area. Washroom cleaning practices should, therefore, be increased, with particular attention placed on the frequent disinfection of constantly touched surfaces.

Frequent cleaning of other constantly touched surfaces post hand washing and in production areas should also be undertaken – stair rails, door handles, control panels/switches, keyboards etc.

Such frequent cleaning of constantly touched surfaces should also be undertaken in non-production and ancillary areas such as reception, canteen, changing rooms, toilet facilities etc.



Hand Hygiene Practices – Hand Gels

Where hand washing is not possible, frequent use of hand gels/rubs should be established. The universal approach is to use products containing between 60%-80% alcohol. It is known, however, that such products are in short supply and so alternative products may be more frequently used.

The current coronavirus responsible for COVID-19, SARS-CoV-2, is an enveloped virus and it is assumed that disinfectants making either virucidal, limited spectrum or enveloped virus control claims to EN 14476 would be effective against it.

In general laboratory conditions, it would be unsafe to test disinfectants against SARS-CoV-2. Further information can be gained about the disinfectant resistance of SARS-CoV-2, however, using the method of EN 14476 and using surrogate viruses. Surrogates are viruses that are closely related to SARS-CoV-2 but are regarded as safer to handle in the laboratory.

Such surrogates include Canine coronavirus, Feline coronavirus and Murine hepatitis virus (MHV). As the COVID-19 outbreak develops, disinfectant and hand hygiene product manufacturers may use these surrogate viruses to help make performance claims against SARS-CoV-2.

Holchem make a range of alcohol based and other hand hygiene products with supporting claims for SARS-CoV-2 control.

Hand Hygiene Practices – Hand Drying

Hand drying techniques such as paper towels and high velocity air dryers produce aerosols from the drying process. Questions have been raised as to whether this poses a risk in the washroom environment. It is believed, however, that COVID-19 is primarily transferred on large droplets (hence the need to keep 2m apart) rather than aerosols. In addition, with food operatives likely to be in good health and after a thorough handwash, the likelihood of viral particles being on the hand is low. Good hand washing and drying techniques should thus be encouraged.



In terms of good washroom practice, paper towels, which absorb such droplets, should be hygienically disposed of and waste bins should be frequently emptied. High velocity dryers tend to spread large droplets to their sides (again within 2m) and wetted areas of the washroom environment and the units themselves should be frequently disinfected.