

COVID-19 GUIDANCE FOR CLEANING EQUIPMENT

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General risks

This guidance document explains what you should do to reduce the chances of spreading the virus that causes COVID-19 through contact with contaminated paddling equipment and hard surfaces.

While there are still a lot of unanswered questions, we know the following:

- The virus can survive for up to 72 hours on plastic and stainless steel.¹
- Most household disinfectants will kill it fairly quickly.²
- There is some evidence that it does not survive long in sunlight and fresh air, so there is likely to be a lower risk outdoors.³

In addition to COVID-19 risks, there remains a serious threat to our waterways from invasive non-native species (INNS). Many of these species can harm or even kill our native wildlife. Where they clog up a waterway, it can stop recreation in that area completely.

Cleaning guidance – paddling with own equipment

- Avoid sharing equipment with anyone outside of your household.
- If you are not moving between different waterways or sharing your equipment, then there is no need to wash your equipment before and after every use, though it's still good practice to regularly clean your equipment and leave it to dry.
- Wash your hands regularly or use hand sanitiser, especially if you touch any gates, door handles, etc.
- If you are moving between different waterways, then follow normal [Check Clean Dry](#) guidance.

Cleaning guidance – shared equipment in one location

If you are not moving equipment between different waterways or catchment areas but you are sharing equipment, then you need to protect against the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19.

- Between each use, you should wipe down all equipment outdoors, either with normal household disinfectant or a specialist cleaning solution for equipment. This includes boats, paddles, buoyancy aids and any other shared objects or materials.

¹ https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMc2004973?query=featured_home

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

³ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/05/13/sunlight-fresh-air-can-protect-against-coronavirus-sage-adviser/>

- We do not recommend any specific cleaning product and government advice currently states that you can use whatever household disinfectants you normally use. We recommend you contact the manufacturer of the equipment for advice on which disinfectants are safe to use on that equipment.
- Wear suitable PPE, such as a mask, disposable gloves and an apron, if you are cleaning equipment that has been used by someone outside of your household.
- Move away from the edge of the water when cleaning to ensure there is no run-off of your cleaning product into the waterway. Ideally find an area of hard standing with a mains water supply.
- Pay special attention to the bow and stern of the boat, seats, cockpit rims, buoyancy bags and footrests.
- When cleaning equipment, remember to clean inside the folds of cagoules, dry suits, buoyancy aids, spray decks and throw lines.
- Use a tank with a specialist wetsuit disinfecting solution to immerse items such as wetsuits.
- If you are unable to clean certain items of equipment you should allocate an equipment quarantine area and leave items there for 72 hours between each use.
- If equipment is used infrequently, you can use a 72-hour equipment quarantine area *instead* of washing the equipment.
- If someone other than the next user has to move equipment after it has been cleaned (for example to lift it off a trailer when arriving at a launch point), they should take note of where they touched the equipment, and then wipe down those surfaces before the next user touches the equipment.
- Dispose of any cleaning supplies in a sealed plastic bag or wash in a washing machine with detergent.
- Wash your hands or use hand sanitiser immediately after cleaning any equipment.

If you are managing a facility with shared equipment or visitors, then you should also ensure you have handwashing facilities or hand sanitiser dispensers in high contact areas (i.e. near doorways, gates). Put up signs to remind people to wash their hands and explain your equipment cleaning protocols so that participants feel reassured about the safety of the activity.

You should also clean toilets and changing rooms more frequently, following all current government guidance on cleaning shared facilities and protecting cleaning staff.

Cleaning guidance – shared equipment in multiple locations

If you are using shared equipment on multiple waterways, then you need to disinfect all equipment to stop the spread of invasive non-native species **and** the virus that causes COVID-19.

- **CHECK** – Immediately after paddling, check over your equipment, remove any animal or plant material from your boat and equipment, and leave it on site.
- **CLEAN** – Clean and disinfect your boat and equipment.
- **DRY** – Leave everything to dry before using again.

Follow our guidance in the previous section about how to clean the equipment, with the following important differences:

- If possible, use hot water (45C) in addition to a household or specialist disinfectant, as it will kill 99% of invasive species (but you should still use a disinfectant to kill any virus on the item).

- Do not use a 72-hour equipment quarantine area instead of cleaning equipment as you must wash equipment to stop the spread of invasive non-native species; The 72-hour quarantine is only effective against COVID-19.
- Leave all equipment to dry completely before using again.