

As we learn to live within the new world of Covid Secure operations the TSA and UK Hospitality has put together some points to consider when reviewing your own risk assessments guidance and procedures for handling linen within your venue/hotel. Fortunately handling linen is a low risk function and there have been no known infections related to linens in the hospitality operations.

The Textile Services Association have been working with their laundry members to plan for the reopening of the hospitality sector and have issued detailed guidelines to all laundries. These hospitality guidelines compliment and are included within the laundry guidance and should ensure together we can continue to operate within a safe but hopefully commercially viable operation. In our discussions with hotel operators in the hospitality sector, the following aspects were identified; you may want to consider how these suits your operations. When you reopen after the Covid-19 lockdown, the following aspects may be included within your reopening guidelines/policies:

1. Clean linen should be stored in a locked linen room and accessed only on 'as required' basis.
2. Soiled linen should ideally be stored in a separate area in cages with physical barriers or shrouded with plastic covers.
3. Housekeeping trolleys should segregate soiled and clean linen i.e. either in separate trolleys or with physical barriers.
4. When stripping beds, handle linen gently.
5. Clean linen should only be brought into the room only once the cleaning is complete and the soiled linen removed.
6. Used table linen should be collected directly into clear plastic bags (wet linen should be kept separate and air dried prior to bagging).
7. Try to store the soiled linen on a ground floor as near to an external exit as possible and ideally away from public and high foot traffic flow areas.
8. Review the collection and delivery risk assessments in liaison with your laundry provider.
9. Try to develop a contactless collection and delivery process – avoid the requirements for signatures etc.
10. If linen is wrapped or in sealed containers only unwrap as required.
11. Reduce stock levels where possible.
12. As a component of an overall duty of care, consider ways to make adequate hand washing facilities available for the delivery/collection drivers.
13. Where a venue is notified that the guest has become unwell and is showing symptoms of Covid-19, then the following process should be;
 - a. When the linen is identified and contained within a room and / or clearly traceable – depending on the risk assessment, the hotel/venue should consider quarantining the room and the linen bagged (as per the agreed procedure), clearly labelled and ready for the laundry to make a decision. Depending on your local risk assessment, you should consider a deep-clean and thorough disinfection of the room and any other relevant facilities.
 - b. When the linen cannot be traced any longer, already been removed from the room in question, mixed with other linen and waiting for collection by the laundry – the hotel/venue should notify the laundry and agree a process for linen collection.
 - c. When the linen cannot be traced any longer and already in the possession of the laundry – the hotel/venue should inform the laundry provider with the time periods of the potential contamination and any other information that can help the laundry manage the risk as best as they can.

CORONAVIRUS BRIEFING

Managing Linen in Hotels & the Hospitality Sector

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14. PPE/RPE and Risk Assessments: Depending on the Government guidelines on 'working safely', consider options regarding Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and/or Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) after all other reasonably practicable measures have been introduced to prevent or control exposure.
15. Documenting lessons learned and working with your laundry providers to develop a review process.
16. In the event you operate an OPL (On Premise Laundry), you should ensure that your wash programme is able to achieve thermal and/or chemical-thermal disinfection and additional segregation procedures to ensure that any risk of cross contamination of clean and soiled linen is minimised.

In the first instance, please contact your local laundry to discuss any of the topics discussed in this document. They will happily provide you with the guidance, assistance or support you need. If you wish, you can contact the Textile Services Association by telephone on **020 3151 5600** or by email on tsa@tsa-uk.org

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