

## 1. INTRODUCTION

When Covid-related border controls between the UK and France are relaxed, hopefully by Spring 2021, this will not mean that the threat from Coronavirus has disappeared. Even when Covid vaccination has become widespread, there may still be the risk of further local outbreaks of the infection. **The main ‘domestic’ means to manage this risk is for guests and cleaners to practise social distancing and high standards of hygiene and cleanliness.**

Renting a country house in Gascony means going to a holiday destination that fortunately has one of the lowest rates of Covid-related infection and death in France. With Gascony’s low population density, generally healthy lifestyle and excellent medical infrastructure, there is every chance that our Covid risk will remain extremely low – but this will require vigilance!

Our Simply Gascony **‘Covid Control Commitment’** (‘CCC’) is to ensure the highest realistically possible standard of hygiene and cleanliness for all the rental properties we represent. We have therefore produced this policy document for our property owners and asked them to apply these standards, or the equivalent, when they or their housekeeper/cleaners prepare their property for any Simply Gascony rental. These CCC standards are intended for the protection of both cleaners and of guests.

## 2. BASICS

**Clean first, then disinfect.** By cleaning first, then disinfecting, the risk of spreading infection is lowered. Owners are therefore asked to instruct their cleaning team to do this for each clean. Cleaning *removes* germs, dirt, and impurities, whilst disinfecting *kills* germs with chemicals. This two-stage approach reduces the risk of spreading infection.

**All laundry** should be washed using a bleach or other disinfectant-based laundry detergent containing active oxygen bleach at a temperature of at least 60 degrees.

**At least 1 pot of hand sanitiser** should be provided for each property, and 2 or 3 pots for the larger properties.

**Guests should remove outdoor shoes** when entering the property, as this minimises the transfer of germs.

**Cleaners should remove outdoor shoes** when entering a property and inside should practise social distancing (1 metre distance for face-to-face communication); cleaners should wear masks and gloves when cleaning.

*These recommendations are based on the advice of, but not necessarily approved by, the VRMA (Vacation Rental Management Association): [www.vrma.org/page/vrhp/vrma-cleaning-guidelines-for-covid-19](http://www.vrma.org/page/vrhp/vrma-cleaning-guidelines-for-covid-19), and then cross-checked with advice here in France.*

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## DETAILS

**Cleaning:** cleaners should either spray the surfaces with distilled white vinegar and then wipe down with a clean cloth, or simply use a microfibre cloth with warm water, or a cleaning cloth dipped in detergent solution and wrung out fully. The cleaning will need to cover all contact surfaces, such as bed ends, all handles, doorknobs, bannisters, kitchen appliances and condiment pots. Cutlery trays will need to be re-washed between stays.

**Disinfecting:** cleaners should then disinfect all the areas they have cleaned using a disinfectant which is alcohol-based with a strength of at least 70%. Alternatively use household bleach containing sodium hypochlorite diluted in cold water. Both methods should kill viruses quite quickly by breaking down their cell walls. Many products marketed as antibacterial do not work against a virus like Covid-19. They need to contain at least 70% alcohol to have any impact on viruses, so when buying specific disinfectant products like spray or wipes, check that they work against viruses as well as bacteria.

**The effectiveness of disinfectant** at killing germs and viruses depends on the length of time it is left to work, known as 'contact time'. Expert advice is that a disinfectant should be left for at least one minute, and preferably for three minutes, on the surface being treated.

**Detergents.** Use a bleach or other disinfectant-based laundry detergent containing active oxygen bleach. Biological powders tend to have more bleaching agents than non-biological powders. Wash reusable cloths and tea towels at 60 degrees or more between uses and change these frequently.

### 3. ADVICE FOR CLEANERS

Wear a good quality **mask** for cleaning. Once a mask is moist or wet it should not be used anymore. For a disposable mask, discard it appropriately. For a cloth mask that can be reused or washed, carefully place it in a zipper bag to be disinfected later.

Wear **gloves** for cleaning. Gloves should be changed between properties and between certain in-property tasks. Hands should be washed as soon as possible after gloves are removed.

Remove **shoes** as you enter the property.

**Ventilate rooms** before you clean. The Centre for Disease Control (CDC) recommends opening outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the property before beginning to clean and disinfect, and this has been confirmed as one of the most effective forms of protection.

**Avoid touching** your face while cleaning.

Remember to dispose of gloves and use hand sanitizer when finished and before entering your car and especially before touching the steering wheel.

**Wash hands thoroughly in hot water for at least 20 seconds**, at least once an hour, and especially when gloves are removed. If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol may be used.

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#### **4. ADVICE FOR GUESTS**

Please follow French government guidelines for social distancing and wearing masks when in public places, or using public transport, and avoid crowds. Local markets and larger shops have marked out 'one-way' routes and you should follow these.

When you return from a trip shopping or sight-seeing, please wash your hands thoroughly in hot water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol may be used.

Remove shoes as you enter the property.

Because this additional cleaning takes more time, which makes changeovers more difficult, guests are asked to respect the advertised arrival/departure times for each property.

Please contact Simply Gascony ([robin@simply-gascony.co.uk](mailto:robin@simply-gascony.co.uk)) with any comments you may have on these guidelines, either before, during or after your holiday.

**BE CAREFUL - SIMPLY ENJOY – SIMPLY GASCONY – STAY SAFE**

**1 JANUARY 2021**