

Regulations:
Sick Building Syndrome

EMPLOYER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Although the syndrome is not specifically covered/highlighted under specific legislation, employers should be aware that they have responsibilities under the following legislation to prevent and reduce the causes associated with SBS ([Unison, 2004](#)).

Health and safety at work act 1974

The employer has a duty to provide and maintain a healthy and safe workplace. If SBS is suspected within the workplace, the employer must carry out investigations to identify the source of the problem or to prove that SBS is not present. The employer must also be aware that even if the pollutant levels are below the legal maximum, if these are found to be causing problems to employees' health, steps must still be taken to remove/reduce them.

Management of health and safety at work regulations, 1999

Management of health and safety within a workplace should be achieved by the use of risk assessments. If SBS is suspected or proven within a building, it must be included in the risk assessment, which needs to state what measures are required to lower the risk.

Workplace health, safety and welfare regulations, 1992

The workplace regulations state the (minimum) standards of the workplace environment, including areas such as ventilation and temperature, lighting, cleanliness, and dimensions of room/circulation space.

MAKING YOUR PLAN TO CLEAN AND DISINFECT

Cleaning with soap and water removes germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces. It lowers the risk of spreading infection.

Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces. By killing germs on a surface after cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection.



Is the area indoors?

YES

It is an indoor area.

NO

Maintain existing cleaning practices.

Coronaviruses naturally die in hours to days in typical indoor and outdoor environments. Viruses are killed more quickly by warmer temperatures and sunlight.

Has the area been occupied within the last 7 days?

YES

Yes, the area has been occupied within the last 7 days.

NO

The area has been unoccupied within the last 7 days.
The area will need only routine cleaning.



Is it a frequently touched surface or object?

YES

Yes, it is a frequently touched surface or object.

NO

Thoroughly clean these materials.
Consider setting a schedule for routine cleaning and disinfection, as appropriate.



What type of material is the surface or object?

Hard and non-porous materials like glass, metal, or plastic.

Visibly dirty surfaces should be cleaned prior to disinfection.

Consult EPA's list of disinfectants for use against COVID-19, specifically for use on hard, non-porous surfaces and for your specific application need. More frequent cleaning and disinfection is necessary to reduce exposure.

Soft and porous materials like carpet, rugs, or material in seating areas.

Thoroughly clean or launder materials.

Consider removing soft and porous materials in high traffic areas. Disinfect materials if appropriate products are available.

