

# Information about the Importance of Staying in Appropriate Accommodation



Exposure to COVID-19 is a public health risk which affects all citizens. Shared accommodation can pose an extra risk of COVID-19 transmission. Research has found a link between living in large households and the risk of becoming infected with COVID-19<sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup>. Therefore, for the wellbeing and the health and safety of yourself and other tenants, it is important to stay in hygienic accommodation which is not overcrowded.

## Physical distancing

Physical distancing guidelines (in line with the Government's Public Health advice) should be followed if sharing a room with another tenant and a 2 metre distance should be maintained. Twin rooms should be the maximum occupancy type. Limit the presence of visitors in line with public health advice<sup>3</sup>.

## Ventilation

Where possible, windows and doors should be opened on a regular basis to allow for a flow of air throughout the property. When bedrooms are being cleaned, windows and/or doors where appropriate, should be opened. Further information regarding air conditioning and ventilation can be found in Section 5.d of the [Work Safely Protocol](#)<sup>4</sup>.

## Sharing utensils

- Hands should be washed and disinfected with hand sanitizer before use of shared utensils.
- Shared utensils should be thoroughly cleaned with hot water and washing up liquid *before* and *after* use. Gloves should be used where possible for cleaning and washing up.
- All textiles (e.g. shared tea towels/towels) should be washed using a hot-water cycle (60°C) with laundry detergent

## Sharing common spaces

- Physical distancing should be maintained in shared common spaces
- Shared common areas, such as kitchens or living rooms, should be cleaned frequently and all tenants should be encouraged to clean and disinfect after their own use (in addition to scheduled cleaning of common areas). Particular attention should be paid to door handles, stair railings, fridge doors, drawer handles, kettles, microwaves, remote controls etc.
- Alter schedules to reduce mixing and close contact, such as staggering meal and TV times.

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<sup>1</sup> Mejia, M.A. and Cha, P. (2018), 'Overcrowded Housing and COVID-19 Risk among Essential Workers', available at <https://www.ppic.org/blog/overcrowded-housing-and-COVID-19-risk-among-essential-workers/>, 24/06/2021.

<sup>2</sup> Fernandez, E. and Weiler, N. (2020), 'Initial Results of Mission District COVID-19 Testing Announced' <https://www.ucsf.edu/news/2020/05/417356/initial-results-mission-district-COVID-19-testing-announced>, 24/06/2021.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/c36c85-covid-19-coronavirus/>, 24/06/2021

<sup>4</sup> <https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/Work-Safely-Protocol.pdf>, 24/06/2021

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## Shared bathrooms

- Shared bathrooms should be cleaned regularly with disinfectant and/or bleach
- Bathrooms should continuously be stocked with soap and sanitizer.
- Bins should be emptied regularly and gloves should be used to do so.
- Sinks could be an infection source and toothbrushes should not be placed directly on counter surfaces. Totes/bags/boxes should be used for personal items to limit their contact with other surfaces in the bathroom.