

Misting frequently asked questions

What is the product being used?

The product name is Zoono. It is a water-based antimicrobial protection system that is applied using misting machines.

Is the product safe?

Once a room has been misted, it is completely safe for all users. It is food-safe and contains no alcohol, harmful or corrosive products. It is water based and the misting process ensures the moisture levels are so low it will not affect fixtures, fittings or paperwork. Within 15 minutes of the particles landing on the surfaces, they are completely safe.

Who will be deploying the misting agent?

Atlas, who currently deliver our touchpoint cleaning service, are contracted to deploy the product.

How does it work?

Once an area has been misted, the product forms a protective layer on all surfaces, including doors, walls, tables and fabrics. The protective layer is made up of antimicrobial 'spikes' that pierce the virus molecule on impact, popping it like a balloon. Since it kills mechanically, rather than chemically, there is no risk of the virus mutating or becoming resistant.

How often does it need to be applied?

The product claims to be safe for up to 28 days, so a 4-week programme is anticipated, although this will depend on the results of the testing.

Will touchpoint cleaners remain?

All touchpoint cleaners will be retained during the pilot. This pilot is not to test the effectiveness of the product – we have confirmation from the manufacturer that the product works, and we are confident in that fact. This pilot is to test how long the protective layer stays viable for.

How is the protective layer being tested?

We will be carrying out swab testing on days 14, 21 and 28 of the cycle on the protective layer to ensure that it is still viable. If there are any concerns, we have the option to shorten the length of the cycle.

Will cleaning or touchpoint cleaning affect the effectiveness?

No - the cleaning products in use by our general and touchpoint cleaners should not affect or degrade the protective layer created by the misting. However, this is one of the reasons we are carrying out this pilot test. The usual cleaning regime will not change.

What happens if we have a confirmed case of COVID-19 in one of these areas?

During the pilot period, we will still undertake a section 16 specialist clean in those areas in the usual way.

If we already have adequate cleaning processes, why are we trialling something new?

At the moment, our custody suites can only hold one detained person per day per cell. Misting will ensure that the custody suites are COVID-safe in between the touchpoint cleaning. This will allow us to increase the number of people using them without reducing safety.

Why are we misting courtrooms?

Courtrooms are being misted with an intention to remove or reduce the amount of touchpoint cleaning required in courtrooms which is impacting and disrupting the business. The touchpoint cleaning regime will not be reduced during testing.

When will the misting be happening?

The misting will be done outside of core hours so the business is not affected and will usually be overnight or very early in the morning. Liaison with the Building Champion or Senior Person on Site will take place when the work is scheduled.

How soon can we enter an area that has been misted?

Misting is being done outside of core hours, when a minimum of people will be on site, so there is unlikely to be a reason for anyone to enter the area for several hours. However, once misting has taken place, we recommend waiting 30 minutes before entering the room. This will ensure that no droplets are still in the air, and that the product has had a chance to bond securely with all surfaces.

How were the pilot sites chosen?

Pilot sites have been selected by our colleagues in Prisoner Escorting and Custody Services (PECS), based at locations where either the ability to operate 'one person per cell per day' is no longer feasible, or where the frequent use of touchpoint cleaning is causing too much disruption.

Will other areas/premises be misted?

Once the pilot is completed, we will have further discussions to look at using the misting system more widely.

What if the date/time for the fogging is or becomes unsuitable because of court business or essential maintenance works, or there are other issues that need to be raised?

The SPOS should contact their local Engie service delivery manager, through whom last-minute cancellations/changes can be escalated

Who is briefing OCS, Engie and PECS staff at the site?

Engie are the principle contractor on this and are managing all other parties (Atlas, Bunzl and OCS) so we will be expecting them to ensure all affected contractors /suppliers are aware.

Are judiciary aware of this pilot?

Judicial Office and senior national judges are aware. We are asking regional DDs to inform Circuit Presiders, and the SPOS' on affected sites to inform their senior judge.

How can the SPOS be assured that business will be unaffected, particularly large sites where fogging will take 12 hours?

The times allotted for each site carry a generous safety margin and it is expected that the misting will be complete well within the allotted timescale. As a failsafe, we have agreed with Engie a cut off time whereby all work is to cease to ensure normal business operations are not impacted.

Which areas of the courtroom will be sprayed?

All 'open' areas within the court, including the dock and public galleries. The Building Champion should liaise with their respective areas to ensure all areas are accessible

on the day of misting. Any loose items which it is currently appropriate to remain in the courtrooms, e.g. remote controls, paper, keyboards and mouse, books etc. can remain in place as they will not be damaged by the misting.

Won't items in courtrooms be damaged e.g. technology, upholstery, papers (although these should be in plastic wallets)?

No - the product contains no harmful or corrosive products, is water based and the misting process ensures the moisture levels are so low it will not affect fixtures, fittings or paperwork.

Will the smoke alarms or VESDA (Very Early Smoke Detection Apparatus) be affected by the misting?

The potential for activation of fire detection is small. However, site(s) in which this will affect should have suitable contactors on site to reset any activations of the system, if they occur.

Will efficacy testing take place also take place out of hours and how long will this take?

The first tests are to take place 14 days after misting has been carried out. The programme – and details of the timing and duration of testing - will be shared once received.