



Case Study: **THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION AUDIENCE CLEANING**



Photo by Alexander Svensson



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The Client



The Project

COVID-19 Cleaning and Sanitisation
Services for BBC Offices and Studios

Location

BBC Broadcasting House, London, and
Various Regional Studios across the UK

Dates

August 2020 – the end of the
COVID-19 Pandemic

The Background

The BBC, as one of the world's leading public broadcasters, remained operational throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, delivering essential news, information, and entertainment to the UK and beyond. However, like many other organisations, the BBC faced significant challenges in ensuring the safety and well-being of its staff, guests, and visitors while maintaining its essential services.

The nature of the BBC's work, involving on-air broadcasts, live news reports, and behind-the-scenes operations, meant that their facilities, such as offices, studios, production areas, and public spaces, required heightened cleaning and sanitization efforts during the pandemic. The need for rigorous and regular cleaning protocols was crucial to prevent the spread of the virus and to comply with government guidelines and health regulations.



The Challenges

The BBC needed a reliable, efficient, and highly adaptable cleaning service to:

Ensure Safe Working Conditions: Staff working across multiple studios, offices, and remote locations needed to return to work in a safe environment after lockdowns were lifted, without the risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19.

Protect On-Air Talent and Crew: The on-air talent, news presenters, journalists, and crew needed to work in sanitised environments due to high foot traffic and constant interaction between individuals.

Comply with Health Guidelines: The BBC needed to comply with public health regulations and government guidelines, which constantly evolved, requiring flexibility and quick implementation of new cleaning protocols.

Minimise Disruption to Broadcast Operations: Given the BBC's live broadcast operations, cleaning procedures needed to be non-intrusive, ensuring that work continued without delays or disruptions.

The Solution

Tailored COVID-19 Cleaning Strategy

► **Comprehensive Risk Assessment and Tailored Cleaning Plan**

A detailed risk assessment was carried out across the BBC's key facilities, identifying high-risk areas such as newsrooms, studios, production rooms, and communal spaces. This assessment formed the basis of a customised cleaning plan.

Identification of High-Touch Surfaces: Special attention was given to high-touch surfaces such as door handles, desks, light switches, microphones, and equipment handles.

Zoning of High-Risk Areas: Areas such as live studios and broadcast control rooms were identified as high-risk zones that required more frequent and intensive cleaning, especially as the BBC wanted to continue to invite live audiences to their broadcasts.

► **Enhanced Cleaning Protocols**

Given the nature of COVID-19, a heightened level of cleaning and sanitization was necessary. The cleaning strategy followed the latest guidance from the UK's Department of Health and WHO (World Health Organisation).

Disinfecting and Sanitisation: The cleaning team employed hospital-grade disinfectants that were proven to kill viruses, including COVID-19. Special emphasis was placed on disinfecting frequently touched surfaces multiple times a day.



Deep Cleaning: In addition to daily cleaning, a deep cleaning of the entire facility was conducted weekly, focusing on thorough sanitisation of floors, walls, and shared equipment.

Fogging and Electrostatic Spraying: Electrostatic sprayers and fogging techniques were utilised to cover larger areas like audience seating in studios, offices, and communal spaces with a disinfectant mist, ensuring hard-to-reach surfaces were sanitised effectively.

► **Focused Cleaning Teams for Broadcast Areas**

The cleaning staff was divided into specialised teams that focused on particular zones within the BBC's facilities:

Production Areas & Studios: Regular cleaning and sanitisation took place before and after shows. This included cleaning desks, chairs, microphones, and control equipment.

Newsrooms and Offices: Workspaces were sanitised at the start of each shift, with specific attention to shared desks, computers, and phones. Cleaning teams ensured that any shared areas, such as kitchens and breakrooms, were wiped down regularly.

Common Areas: High-traffic areas like corridors, lifts, toilets, and meeting rooms were sanitised regularly throughout the day to limit cross-contamination.

► **Implementation of Social Distancing Measures**

To support the BBC's efforts to maintain social distancing, cleaning teams adopted specific operational practices to ensure minimal contact with staff and crew during working hours.

Flexible Scheduling: Cleaning teams were scheduled during off-peak hours, including before the start of the working day, during breaks, or after hours, ensuring that cleaning did not interfere with the station's programming and operations.

Signage and Protective Measures: Clear signage was placed in common areas to remind staff of hygiene practices, social distancing, and the importance of regular handwashing. Cleaning staff wore full personal protective equipment (PPE), including gloves, masks, and face shields, to protect themselves and the workers.

► **Ongoing Monitoring and Adaptation**

The cleaning protocols were continuously monitored and adapted in response to evolving COVID-19 regulations, infection rates, and the BBC's operational needs.

Feedback Mechanism: The BBC implemented a feedback loop to monitor the effectiveness of cleaning practices. Staff were encouraged to report any concerns or areas that needed additional attention.

Adaptation to New Guidelines: As government guidelines and public health recommendations evolved, the cleaning plan was updated to include additional protocols, such as more frequent disinfecting of certain surfaces or specific antiviral treatments.



The Execution

The security of the cleaning staff and the BBC personnel was a priority throughout the execution of the cleaning protocols. The following actions ensured that the cleaning operations met the needs of the BBC:

Staffing and Training: All cleaning personnel received specialised training on COVID-19 safety, proper disinfectant usage, and infection control protocols.

Coordination with BBC Management: Cleaning schedules were coordinated with BBC management to ensure minimal disruption to live broadcasts and the daily flow of operations. Regular meetings with BBC health and safety teams ensured alignment with any updated COVID-19 policies.

Communication and Transparency: Regular updates were provided to BBC staff about the cleaning protocols in place, giving them confidence that the workplace was safe and regularly sanitised.

The Outcome

The COVID-19 cleaning services provided to the BBC were a success, with measurable outcomes in both safety and operational continuity.

Reduced Risk of Infection: There were no reported outbreaks of COVID-19 within the BBC's offices or broadcast areas during the pandemic's peak. The rigorous cleaning protocols helped reduce the potential for transmission of the virus among staff and talent.

Operational Continuity: Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, the BBC's live broadcast operations continued without major disruption. The cleaning services ensured that the facilities remained safe for production teams and on-air talent.

Compliance with Health Standards: The BBC successfully met government health and safety regulations, ensuring that the workplace was always compliant with COVID-19 guidelines.

Positive Feedback from Staff: BBC employees and on-air talent expressed high levels of satisfaction with the cleaning procedures, citing the visible commitment to health and safety.



The Lessons Learned

Adaptability is Key: As government health guidelines changed, the cleaning strategy was able to quickly adapt, ensuring ongoing compliance and protection.

Communication and Coordination: Maintaining clear communication between the cleaning teams, management, and staff helped ensure a smooth execution of cleaning protocols, which was critical in a high-pressure, live broadcast environment.

Continuous Monitoring: Regular feedback and adaptation to evolving needs ensured that the cleaning services stayed relevant and effective throughout the pandemic.

The Conclusion

The COVID-19 cleaning services provided to the BBC played a pivotal role in maintaining the safety and health of staff and talent during a challenging and unprecedented time. Through thorough planning, specialised cleaning protocols, and continuous adaptation, the BBC was able to continue its essential operations while providing a safe, sanitised environment. This case highlights the importance of flexibility, communication, and expert knowledge in tackling health crises in high-functioning, high-profile organizations.

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