

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Hand Hygiene Protocols and Frequency Schedules

This SOP establishes **hand hygiene protocols and frequency schedules** to ensure effective infection control and prevent the spread of contaminants. It defines the appropriate handwashing techniques, use of hand sanitizers, and designated times for hand hygiene practices throughout the workday. The protocols apply to all personnel and visitors, emphasizing critical moments for hand hygiene such as before eating, after using the restroom, and after contact with potentially contaminated surfaces or materials. Adherence to these guidelines promotes a safe and hygienic environment in healthcare, laboratory, and food handling settings.

1. Scope

This SOP applies to all staff, contractors, and visitors engaged in activities within the facility where hand hygiene is essential for infection control.

2. Purpose

To standardize hand hygiene practices and ensure consistent application of protocols to minimize the risk of contamination.

3. Responsibilities

- **All Personnel:** Adhere to all hand hygiene protocols and follow the frequency schedule as described.
- **Supervisors/Managers:** Ensure compliance, provide training, and make necessary resources available.
- **Visitors/Contractors:** Follow posted hand hygiene instructions and protocols when onsite.

4. Hand Hygiene Protocols

- Perform hand hygiene using either soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Use soap and water when hands are visibly dirty or after contact with bodily fluids.
- Hand sanitizer must contain at least 60% alcohol.
- Remove jewelry and cover all surfaces of hands and wrists during cleaning.

Handwashing Technique (Soap and Water):

1. Wet hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off tap, apply soap.
2. Lather hands by rubbing together with soap (include backs of hands, between fingers, under nails).
3. Scrub for at least 20 seconds.
4. Rinse well under running water.
5. Dry hands with a clean towel or air dry.

Hand Sanitizer Technique:

1. Apply enough sanitizer to cover all hand surfaces.
2. Rub hands together until dry (about 20 seconds).

5. Frequency Schedule

Critical Moment	Required Action
On arrival to the facility	Handwashing or hand sanitizer
Before eating or handling food	Handwashing with soap and water
After using the restroom	Handwashing with soap and water
After contact with bodily fluids or contaminated surfaces	Handwashing with soap and water
After removing gloves or PPE	Handwashing or hand sanitizer
Before and after patient or specimen contact (healthcare/lab)	Handwashing or hand sanitizer
Between tasks/when moving from contaminated to clean areas	Handwashing or hand sanitizer

Critical Moment	Required Action
At the end of the work shift	Handwashing with soap and water

6. Compliance and Monitoring

- Supervisors will conduct periodic observations and audits of hand hygiene practices.
- Non-compliance will be addressed through retraining and, if necessary, disciplinary action.
- Hand hygiene resources must be maintained and fully stocked at all stations.

7. Training

- All personnel must receive training on this SOP during orientation and annually thereafter.
- Training includes demonstration of correct handwashing and sanitizing techniques.

8. Record Keeping

- Training and audit records will be maintained by the department manager for a minimum of 2 years.

9. Review

- This SOP is to be reviewed every 12 months or in response to regulatory updates or incident reports.