

# Standard Operating Procedure (SOP): Personal Hygiene and Handwashing Protocols

## 1. Purpose

This SOP establishes **personal hygiene and handwashing protocols** to prevent the spread of infections and maintain a healthy environment. It covers proper handwashing techniques, recommended hand hygiene products, timing and frequency of handwashing, use of gloves, and guidelines for maintaining overall personal cleanliness. The goal is to promote effective hygiene practices among all personnel to reduce contamination risks and ensure public health safety.

## 2. Scope

This SOP applies to all personnel including staff, contractors, and visitors who enter working areas where hygienic practices are critical, such as healthcare, laboratory, food service, and public facilities.

## 3. Responsibilities

- **All Personnel:** Adhere to personal hygiene and handwashing protocols as described.
- **Supervisors/Managers:** Ensure compliance, provide necessary supplies, and conduct training.
- **Facility Management:** Maintain handwashing stations and hygiene-related supplies.

## 4. Handwashing Protocol

### 4.1. When to Wash Hands

- Before and after eating, preparing food, or handling food equipment.
- After using the restroom.
- After coughing, sneezing, or blowing the nose.
- Before and after treating cuts, wounds, or caring for a sick person.
- After handling waste or garbage.
- After touching potentially contaminated surfaces.
- After removing gloves.

### 4.2. Proper Handwashing Technique

1. Wet hands thoroughly with clean, running water (warm or cold).
2. Apply soap and lather well, covering all surfaces, including backs of hands, between fingers, and under nails.
3. Scrub hands for at least 20 seconds.
4. Rinse hands thoroughly under running water.
5. Dry completely with a clean towel or disposable paper towel; use towel to turn off the faucet.

### 4.3. Hand Hygiene Products

- Use antibacterial soap or standard hand soap for routine handwashing.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid hand sanitizers if hands are visibly soiled; wash with soap and water instead.

## 5. Use of Gloves

- Wear gloves when required by specific job duties or during potential exposure to bodily fluids, chemicals, or contaminated surfaces.
- Do not substitute glove use for handwashing.
- Wash hands before putting on and after removing gloves.
- Dispose of single-use gloves properly after each use; do not reuse disposable gloves.

## 6. Personal Hygiene Standards

- Keep fingernails short, clean, and unpolished.
- Avoid wearing hand and wrist jewelry that may harbor bacteria.
- Wear clean uniforms or attire as per facility guidelines.
- Maintain general cleanliness, including daily bathing and oral hygiene.

- Cover cuts, abrasions, or sores with waterproof dressings.

## **7. Training**

- All personnel must be trained in proper handwashing, glove use, and personal hygiene practices during orientation and at least annually thereafter.
- Training records should be maintained as per facility policy.

## **8. Monitoring and Compliance**

- Supervisors will perform periodic checks to ensure compliance with this SOP.
- Report any violations or supply shortages to management immediately.
- Non-compliance may result in disciplinary action as outlined by facility policy.

## **9. Revision and Review**

- This SOP must be reviewed annually or upon significant change in public health guidelines or facility operations.
- Document all revisions and distribute updated SOP to all personnel.

## **10. References**

- World Health Organization (WHO) Guidelines on Hand Hygiene
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Hand Hygiene Recommendations
- Facility or organization-specific hygiene policies