

Hand Sanitation

This SOP applies to hand sanitation procedures after handling biohazardous materials. Proper hand sanitation reduces the risk of laboratory-acquired infections and other illnesses. Regular handwashing, particularly before and after certain procedures, is the best way to remove contaminants, avoid getting sick and prevent spreading contaminants to others.

Procedure:

1. Wet hands with clean, running water
2. Lather hands with soap by rubbing them together
3. Scrub hands for 15–30 seconds
4. Rinse hands well under clean, running water
5. Dry hands using a clean paper towel
6. Shut the water off using a paper towel
7. You may use a towel to open the door to exit the laboratory

Cautions & Considerations

- Gloves are not a substitute for hand hygiene —wash hands immediately after removing gloves
- The water temperature should be comfortable to promote washing for the correct amount of time
- Scrub all surfaces of the hands, including the backs, between the fingers, under the nails, and around the thumbs
- Helpful hint: Singing “Happy Birthday” or “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star” twice is approximately the length of time required to lather

A few words about hand sanitizers

- *Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs in most situations.* If soap and water are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- You can tell if the sanitizer contains at least 60% alcohol by looking at the product label.

- Sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in many situations. However,
 - Sanitizers do **not** get rid of all types of germs.
 - Hand sanitizers may not be as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy.
 - Hand sanitizers might not remove harmful chemicals from hands like pesticides and heavy metals.

- How to use hand sanitizer
 - Apply the gel product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
 - Rub your hands together.
 - Rub the gel over all the surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry. This should take around 20 seconds.

Resources

- [Biosafety Manual](#)
- [BMBL 5th Edition](#)
- CDC Handwashing: "[Clean Hands Save Lives](#)"