



Hand Hygiene Competency Tool

Hand hygiene is the most important weapon in preventing the spread of disease. Germs can spread from other people or surfaces when you touch them and then touch your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands. Healthcare personnel (HCP) can help keep themselves and others healthy by washing their hands often and correctly.

The CDC states HCP should perform hand hygiene (with hand sanitizer or soap and water):

1. Immediately before and after touching a resident or the resident’s immediate environment
2. Before performing an aseptic technique such as placing an indwelling catheter
3. Before moving from work on a soiled body site to a clean body site
4. After contact with blood body fluids or contaminated surfaces
5. Immediately after removal of gloves

HCP should also wash hands with soap and water:

1. When hands are visibly soiled
2. After caring for a resident with known or suspected infectious diarrhea
3. After known or suspected exposure to spores (e.g. C. Difficile)
4. Before eating
5. After using the restroom



20 SECONDS

The observer can use the competency tool below to ensure staff are washing their hands correctly. Mark an X in the YES boxes below if the employee completes the step correctly or mark an X in the NO box if they do not complete the step correctly. Fill out the tool for each HCP in your facility.

Steps for Handwashing with Soap and Water	Yes	No
Removed jewelry prior to handwashing, if applicable		
Wet hands with water		
Applied soap		
Rubbed hands together to wash all surfaces of hands		
Washed hands for 20 seconds		
Washed under fingernails		
Washed between fingers		
Washed thumbs		
Dried hands thoroughly		
Turned off water with paper towel		
Disposed of paper towel in trash		
Steps for Using Hand Sanitizer	Yes	No
Dispensed ample amount of hand sanitizer		
Rubbed hands together to cover entire surface of hands and fingers		
Allowed hands to dry completely		

HCP Name: _____ Date: _____