



# Hand Hygiene Competency Tool

Hand hygiene is the most important weapon in preventing the spread of disease. Germs can spread between people or surfaces when they are touched by someone and then that person touches their 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 patient or the patient'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 patient 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 the agency.

| 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:** \_\_\_\_\_