

FW/06: Hand wash facilities and effective washing of hands

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Unwashed hands are vehicles of infection, therefore effective hand washing is a fundamental principle of both personal and food hygiene, and must be carried out on a regular basis to reduce the numbers of transient pathogenic bacteria, which can give rise to contamination of food.

2.0 Provision of hand wash facilities

2.1 To secure legislative compliance the following must be made readily available at all times:

- hot (guide to compliance provided at 45°C) and cold running water;
- anti-bacterial soap;
- appropriate drying facilities e.g. paper towel dispenser;

2.2 The following shall be provided to promote the regular and effective washing of hands:

- adequate number of wash hand basins in appropriate locations;
- signage at all wash hand basins e.g. 'now wash your hands please';
- unrestricted access to wash hand basins;
- foot operated waste bins within the immediate proximity; and

2.3 It is the responsibility of all grades of staff to report and/or resolve any shortfalls in the provision of the afore-mentioned facilities.

2.4 Taps are 'hand-contact' items, hence are vehicles for the transfer of bacteria and for this reason must be cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis.

3.0 Hand washing

3.1 Managers' have a responsibility to ensure that:

- they lead by example in the practice of hand washing;
- all staff are inducted in the ways and means of effective hand washing; and
- staff are supervised and motivated to follow the correct procedure for hand washing.

3.2 All food handlers must wash their hands on a regular basis and in any event:

- before commencing work;
- after handling raw foods such as; meat, poultry, eggs, fruit and vegetables;
- in between food handling tasks;
- after handling refuse;
- after handling cleaning chemicals;
- after coughing, sneezing and /or blowing their nose;
- after taking a lunch break;

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- after visiting the toilet;
- after touching hair, face or other parts of the body; and
- after smoking.

NB: The afore-mentioned list of requirements is by no means exhaustive and food handlers must exercise discretion at all times.

4.0 Hand sanitiser gel

- 4.1 The use of a hand sanitiser gel must not be used as an alternative for hand-washing.
- 4.2 Prior to applying a hand sanitiser gel the hands should have been washed with hot water & soap, rinsed and thoroughly dried.

Version	Date of issue	Author	Endorsed by
V3	June 2019	Graham Day; Health & Safety Adviser	Graham Hakes; Senior Health & Safety Adviser