

Guidance on Using and Providing Hand Sanitiser

Is hand sanitiser a good replacement in place of washing your hands?

Hand gels should not be used as a replacement for washing your hands (using the [correct technique](#) and for at least 20 seconds) **and must not be used as a replacement in a food preparation environment.** However, hand gels can be useful in circumstances where hand washing is not possible. During the current pandemic you must ensure the hand gel has the correct content as outlined below to be effective against coronavirus and remember there are many hand gels on the market which do not meet this content requirement.



You need to use enough hand gel to completely cover the entire surface of your hands and **if your hands are heavily soiled or greasy the hand sanitiser will not be effective, and you must wash your hands with warm water and bar or liquid soap.**

Are you required to provide hand sanitiser for customers during this pandemic?

Not necessarily, but it will depend on measures you have put in place to mitigate Covid-19 as a risk. Under the Health & Safety at Work Act you have a duty to keep staff, customers and visitors safe which can be achieved by carry out a risk assessment and placing controls required to reduce the risk of infection and transmission Covid-19. The government guidance clearly states that hand washing and keeping hand contact surfaces clean is key to reducing the spread of the virus along with social distancing. If you decide not to provide hand sanitiser for your customers your risk assessment should list alternative controls in place to keep hand contact surfaces and merchandise clean. For further advice on risk assessments and cleaning measures please see our trading safely checklists and Covid19 risk assessment template or contact your local environmental health department.

You should ensure the hand sanitiser you provide to the public displays the required warnings/information labelling that is displayed on the packaging, so that users of the hand sanitiser are aware of what is in the product and how to use it safely. This includes sanitiser provided in a public place, for example if it placed inside a temporary fitting in a park, then the label/information must still be visible to the public.

How does hand sanitiser work?

Active Ingredients: - how does it do what it claims to?

Most hand sanitisers are Alcohol based. Public Health England advise that sanitisers should contain **more than 60% alcohol** content to be effective to protect against Covid19. Alcohol-based hand sanitisers work in a similar way to soap, inactivating the virus by breaking down the lipid layer.

The product claims to be 'Alcohol free' – will that be effective in protecting against Coronavirus?

Alcohol-free hand sanitisers are usually foams. They can be gentler on the skin, but the scientific evidence varies more for alcohol-free products than it does for sanitisers containing alcohol. Alcohol-free hand sanitisers commonly contain ingredients such as benzalkonium chloride or chlorhexidine digluconate. You can ask the supplier for evidence that the product will meet the claims made and how it will protect the user. You can also contact Trading Standards for further advice on this.

The label and marketing state the hand sanitiser is made to the WHO formulation – what does that mean?

The World Health Organisation have devised hand sanitiser production formulations that can be followed by small scale manufacturers to help with the supply shortage during the pandemic

How do I know what to look for when purchasing hand sanitiser for my staff/customers to use?

Label Checks

- 1) Look for active ingredient/alcohol content is **above 60%**
- 2) Look for these alcohol based active ingredients: -
 - Propan-2-ol (also known as Isopropanol and isopropyl alcohol)
 - Propan-1-ol
 - Ethanol
- 3) The Name and Address of the formulation Manufacturer, supplier or Importer in the UK
- 4) Warnings/red diamond pictograms – highlighting chemical risks and hazards
- 5) Weight mark – e.g. 500g
- 6) Date of manufacture and Batch/Lot number
- 7) The following Statements: -
 - a. For external use only
 - b. Avoid contact with eyes
 - c. Keep out of the reach of children
 - d. Use: Apply a palmful of alcohol-based hand rub and cover all surfaces of the hands. Rub hands until dry

Hygiene reminders:

- Use signs and posters with instructions for employees to wash their hands for 20 seconds as often as possible, to avoid touching their faces and to catch coughs and sneezes in tissues
- Remind employees to wash their hands regularly, especially if they handle goods and merchandise
- Provide handwashing facilities (or hand sanitiser where this is not possible) where people handle goods and merchandise
- Make sure toilets are kept clean at all times
- Provide paper towels or electric dryers
- Close changing rooms and showers, if you can

Further advice or support:

If you are unsure of a product that has been offered for supply to you, Hertfordshire Businesses can obtain further advice by contacting the Hertfordshire Trading Standards Business Advice Hotline – 01707 281401 or by email to tradingstandards@hertfordshire.gov.uk