

SUPPLY AND USE OF HAND SANITISER

1. 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. You must ensure the hand gel has the correct content as outlined below to be effective against coronavirus and other viruses.

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. 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.

2. Are You Required to Provide Hand Sanitiser for Customers?

Although not mandatory, it is good practice and could be considered as a control measure as part of your Risk Assessment.

Under the Health & Safety at Work Act you have a duty to undertake a Risk Assessment, which will help keep staff, customers and visitors safe from workplace hazards. COVID is considered a hazard and should be included within your Risk Assessment.

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 and good ventilation.

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 Risk Assessment template or contact your local Environmental Health Department.

3. Do I Need to Show the Label on the Sanitiser / Instructions on Use?

Yes. Users can then be confident that the sanitiser is fit for purpose and that they are using it correctly.

4. How Do I Know What to Look for and How Does Hand Sanitiser Work?

Most hand sanitisers are Alcohol based. Public Health England advise that sanitisers should contain **more than 60% alcohol** content or be manufactured to **BS EN 14476**, to be effective to protect against Covid19 and similar viruses.

Alcohol-based hand sanitisers work in a similar way to soap, inactivating the virus by breaking down the lipid layer.

5. Is 'Alcohol Free' Hand Sanitiser Effective in Protecting Against Coronavirus?

Alcohol-free hand sanitisers are usually foams. Alcohol-free hand sanitisers commonly contain ingredients such as benzalkonium chloride or chlorhexidine digluconate. You can ask the supplier for evidence that the product is effective against COVID / other viruses, and it will protect the user. You can also contact Trading Standards for further advice.

6. The Label Says that the Sanitiser is Made to the WHO Formulation – Who Is WHO?

The World Health Organisation (WHO) have devised hand sanitiser production formulations that can be followed by small scale manufacturers to help with any supply shortage.

7. 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.
- Practice social distancing if possible.
- Ensure that there is adequate ventilation throughout the premises.

8. 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

