

Hand Hygiene Policy and Procedure

Key Changes

AHS has revised the Hand Hygiene Policy and Procedure in 2024 as part of the regularly scheduled policy revision process. Should you have any additional questions regarding the information in the Hand Hygiene Policy and Procedure please contact the Policy and Forms Department at policy@ahs.ca. The clinical policy website is the official source of current approved clinical policies and procedures can be found here: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page14956.aspx>.

The policy and procedure were updated to align with current AHS definitions (e.g., AHS People, formally AHS Representatives), as well as reorganization of content within and between the policy and procedure to improve readability of the documents.

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Policy

1. Added terms and definitions to the objectives (e.g., AHS setting, Designated Family Support Persons and AHS People).
2. Added new content, re-wording and re-organization to add clarity to policy elements.
 - Element (1.2d) Re-organized this content into a list and simplified it for clarity.
 - Element (2.1) Added references for where more information on this topic can be found.
 - Element (3) Changed to Hand Hygiene Considerations in Facilities. IPC also has a separate resource that addresses new infrastructure design.
 - Element (4) Change of annual education to the required Organizational Learning schedule rather than on an annual basis.
 - Element 4.1 Added requires Managers / Supervisors to ensure completion of hand hygiene education and training for AHS People that provide direct patient care or perform other tasks that require hand hygiene to demonstrate understanding.
 - Element (5) Changed to Ability to Perform Hand Hygiene from Barriers to Effective Hand Hygiene.
 - Added Element (5.3) Use of gloves to add clarity.
 - Element (6) Changed section name to better reflect content.
 - Element (6.1) Added mention of supervisors for more clarity.
 - Element (6.2) Added mention of direct observation methodology.
 - Element (6.3 & 6.4) Added new information to address ongoing improvement, included information on sharing results and added examples.

Procedure

1. Added terms and definitions to the objectives (e.g., AHS setting, Designated Family Support Persons and AHS People.)
2. Added new content, re-wording and re-organization to add clarity to Procedure Elements.
3. Updated and re-worded definitions for more clarity. These changes are noted in the Definitions Section of this document as follows:
 - Elements (2.1) Hand Hygiene Product Selection, added reference to Appendix A and 2.1(d) following all PPE removal or glove removal (doffing).
 - Element (2.2) Reordered content (a-d) to better align and with how 2.1 was written to improve readability. Addition of 'all PPE removal' in (2.2d).
 - Element (3.2) Wrist Accessories, elaborated and added examples to add clarity.
 - Element (3.3) Removed photo as it shows long sleeves and contradicts direction provided.
 - Procedure for use of Soap and Water, Element (4) has similar changes as in Element (3) except for the addition of the word disposable paper towel.
 - Element (5.1) Re-worded for clarity.
 - Element (5.2) Reworded for clarity and added direction to contact their "Manager / Supervisor" if unable to perform hand hygiene.

Appendix A

Appropriate Product Selection for Hand Hygiene

- Addition, following all PPE removal or glove removal (doffing) when caring for patients with diarrhea and/or vomiting, the preferred product selection is plain soap and water.

New or changed definitions for Policy & Procedure

- **AHS people** means Alberta Health Services employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, students, volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of Alberta Health Services (including contracted service providers as necessary).
- **AHS setting** means any environment where treatment/procedures and other health services are delivered by, on behalf of or in conjunction with, Alberta Health Services.
- **Direct patient care** means, for the purpose of this document, physical contact with a patient or interacting with the patient's environment (e.g., bathroom) or their belongings.
- **Direct observation methodology** means watching and recording the hand hygiene behaviors of team members and observing the work environment.

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- **Food handling** means to supply, sell, offer for sale, process, prepare, package, provide, display, service, dispense, store or transport any food that is intended for public consumption (e.g., patients, retail food services customers).
- **Health care environment** means, for the purposes of this policy, anywhere the patient may be expected to interact with the environment or receive healthcare and services, including but not limited to fabric room dividers or curtains, foyer areas, dining areas, tub/shower rooms, patient rooms, examination/treatment rooms, and recreation or common areas.
- **Patient** means an individual, inclusive of residents and clients, who receives or has requested healthcare or services from Alberta Health Services and those authorized to act on behalf of Alberta Health Services. In the context of informed consent or other decision-making, patient also means any alternate decision-maker or co-decision maker for the individual, when applicable.
- **Patient's environment** means, for the purpose of this document, the area surrounding the patient where direct patient care occurs.
- **Point of care** means, for the purposes of this document, the area or space where patient care is being provided by AHS people.
- **Supervisor** means a person, whether unionized or non-unionized, who has charge of a work site or authority over an AHS representative.
- **Boil water advisory** means a warning that is issued when tap water is not safe to drink or use as usual.



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