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| **Initial Effective Date** | mm/dd/yyyy |
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| **Authorized/Reviewed by** | Individual or Committee Name |
| **Standard** | 22VAC40-61-290B 1. A and E |

**Definition and Overview (define the infection control practice**)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) define hand hygiene as “cleaning your hands by using either handwashing (washing hands with soap and water), antiseptic hand wash, antiseptic hand sanitizer (i.e., alcohol-based hand sanitizer including foam or gel, containing at least 60% alcohol), or surgical hand antisepsis.”

In this center, hand hygiene is performed by using either alcohol-based hand sanitizer or washing hands with soap and water.

**Purpose (why this policy/procedure is important)**

Hand hygiene is a simple and effective method for preventing the spread of pathogens, such as bacteria and viruses, that cause infections. Pathogens can contaminate the hands of a staff person during direct contact with participants or contact with contaminated equipment and environmental surfaces within proximity of the participant. Failure to clean contaminated hands can result in the spread of these pathogens.

To protect participants, visitors and staff, this center promotes hand hygiene practices before, during and after all care activities, and as appropriate when working in all locations within the center. It is the expectation that hand hygiene is performed routinely as part of this center’s infection prevention program.

**Responsibility (who is responsible for following this policy/procedure)**

All staff and volunteers in the center are responsible for following hand hygiene policies and procedures. All participants and visitors are strongly encouraged to follow these policies.

**Procedure**

Indications for Hand Washing with Soap and Water

1. When hands are visibly dirty/soiled or greasy
2. When actual or possible contact with blood or bodily fluids has occurred
3. Before and after performing first aid
4. After using restroom or assisting an individual in the restroom
5. When changing an incontinence pad or liner
6. Before and after work
7. Before and after breaks
8. Before and after eating
9. Before and after handling and preparing both cooked and uncooked food
10. After touching animals, animal food, or animal waste
11. After touching trash
12. After contact with an individual experiencing vomiting and diarrhea, or known to have *C. difficile* or norovirus.

Steps for Proper Hand Washing with Soap and Water

1. Turn on the faucet and wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold). Leave the faucet running.
2. Apply soap and lather your hands by rubbing them together with soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Scrub all areas of your hands for at least 20 seconds (about the duration of time required to sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice).
4. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
5. Dry your hands using a disposable paper towel and dispose in waste container.
6. Use a clean paper towel to turn off the faucet and dispose in waste container.

Indication for Hand Hygiene Using Alcohol-Based Hand Sanitizer

If hands are not visibly soiled, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol may be used for routinely decontaminating hands.

Through signs and the provision of alcohol-based sanitizer, participants and visitors are strongly encouraged to use it upon arrival to the center and upon leaving.

Steps for proper hand hygiene using alcohol-based hand sanitizer

1. Apply the amount of product recommended by the manufacturer to the palm of one hand.
2. Rub hands together, covering all surfaces of hands and fingers, including between the fingers, around the wrist, and under the fingernails.
3. Continue rubbing until hands dry, or approximately 20 seconds. Do not dry with a towel.

Additional Guidance and Indications

The following provides situations when either handwashing or the use of an alcohol-based hand sanitizer is deemed acceptable:

* **Before:**
  + Touching your face
  + Wearing gloves or between glove changes
* **After:**
  + Eating
  + Handling used face masks
  + Wiping counters or cleaning other surfaces with chemicals
  + Caring for someone who is sick
  + Removing gloves
  + Handling pet food or treats
  + Coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose

**Guidelines, Standards, and Resources for Policy/Procedure Development**

Hand hygiene policies and procedures should be developed using evidence-based guidelines or national standards, such as resources from CDC and VDH. The following resource could be used for developing hand hygiene policy and procedures for the center:

* [2020 CDC Guideline for Hand Hygiene in Healthcare Settings](https://www.cdc.gov/handhygiene/providers/guideline.html)

**Notes and Recommendations**

* Other best practices to consider may include the use of signage describing expectations for hand hygiene at entrances/exits, bathrooms, common areas, etc. (e.g., [Germbuster Poster English.eps (virginia.gov)](https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/174/2023/01/How-to-Wash-Hands-poster.pdf) and [Hand Hygiene (virginia.gov)](https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/174/2023/01/HandHygieneFactSheet.pdf))
* Other participant care policies and procedures should reinforce hand hygiene practices by incorporating performance of hand hygiene as a critical step during activities. Examples may include medication administration, food delivery, handling of soiled linen/laundry, etc.
* Consider providing guidance about fingernail length, use of artificial nails and extenders, hand care and use of lotions. At the center level, please review CDC guidance on fingernail length and establish a related policy.
* If after handwashing or use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer staff wish to use hand lotion, they should be advised to follow their center policy related to this item.
* Maintain adequate hand hygiene supplies in all center locations, including who is responsible and appropriate practices (e.g., proper installation and location of dispensers, frequency of checking supply levels, not topping off product containers).
* For all staff and volunteer training, consider the use of quizzes/tests at the conclusion of training, return demonstration, or teach back of content to ensure comprehension.
* Consider utilizing an auditing schedule for ongoing sustainment of this policy.
* All sources, standards, guidelines, and resources should be verified annually, or more frequently as your center policy dictates, to ensure the most up to date information is provided.