

Mass Gathering Hand Hygiene Guideline

1. Purpose and Scope

This guideline provides information for organisers of mass gatherings. It describes appropriate placement and numbers of hand hygiene stations as well as methods to increase the awareness of the need to perform effective hand hygiene. Additionally, it provides education on effective methods of performing hand hygiene including hand washing and hand sanitising.

2. Related documents

Standards, procedures, guidelines

This guideline is an adaptation from the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service Public Health Unit *Mass Gathering Guideline Hand Hygiene*

- [Food Standards Code Standard 3.2.2 - Food Safety Practices and General Requirements](#)
- [Food Standards Code Standard 3.2.3 - Food Premises and Equipment](#)
- [Health and hygiene responsibilities of food business](#)
- [Licensing requirements for **fixed** food premises](#)
- [Licensing requirements for **temporary** food premises](#)
- [Toilet Facilities at Events Factsheet](#)

3. Guideline for effective hand hygiene at mass gatherings

Hand hygiene is a general term referring to any action of hand cleansing including washing hands with the use of water and soap or a soap solution, or applying an alcohol based hand rub to the surface of the hands.

When performed correctly, hand hygiene results in a reduction of microorganisms on hands. Poor hand hygiene contributes to the spread of pathogens which can be the cause of many health issues such as gastrointestinal and respiratory infections. The large numbers of people in close proximity at mass gatherings increases the risk of illnesses being spread to all involved including: staff, volunteers, participants and spectators. Queensland Health has produced a short [hand hygiene video](#) that explains the importance of hand hygiene.

3.1 Hand washing

Hands should be washed:

- when hands are visibly dirty,
- before and after eating,
- before, during and after preparing food,
- after touching raw meats like chicken or beef, especially before touching other foods
- after contact with any body fluids like blood, urine or vomit,
- after changing nappies,



- after touching animals,
- after nose blowing or sneezing into hands, and
- after going to the toilet

The six steps to successful hand washing are:

1. wet hands with water,
2. put soap on hands,
3. rub palms, back of hands, fingers, thumbs and wrists for 20 seconds
4. rinse hands under water,
5. dry hands with paper towel, and
6. dispose of hand towel in bin.

Queensland Health has produced a poster that demonstrates the [handwashing process](#).

3.2 Hand washing facilities

Hand washing facilities should have adequate clean (pressurised) running water, liquid soap, and paper towels (with waste bins). Adequate cleaning, restocking, and maintenance of facilities should be provided as well as the removal of used paper towels and waste water. Waste water should never be discharged to the ground surface or into any watercourse.

Hand washing facilities must consider the needs of all users including people with disabilities and children.

Fixed

At a mass gathering, existing fixed hand hygiene facilities may be required to deal with many more people than usual. This will require increased levels of servicing to ensure the facilities remain clean, functional, and stocked with soap and paper towels.

Temporary

At a mass gathering, existing permanent hand hygiene facilities may be insufficient to cater for large numbers of people thus requiring temporary facilities to be sourced. The following table provides a guide to the total number of hand wash facilities required based on the number of people expected at a mass gathering. If hand wash facilities can only be accessed by one sex (for example within a male/female ablution block) the number of male/female hand wash facilities should be proportionate to the male/female split of the attendees.

Table 1.

Number of patrons	Recommended number of hand wash facilities at gatherings where alcohol <i>is not</i> served.	Recommended number of hand wash facilities at gatherings where alcohol <i>is</i> being served.
< 500	4	4
< 1000	8	8
< 2000	12	14
< 3000	20	28
< 5000	34	40

Table 1 developed from information provided in the Toolbox Council Knowledge Network fact sheet 'Toilet facilities at events' which can be accessed [here](#).

For patrons exceeding the numbers as per table above, please contact your local council for assessment and recommendations.

Consideration should be given to the placement of temporary hand washing facilities so that they are:

- directly accessible from food service areas, toilets, and workforce breakout areas
- placed at regular intervals, and
- easily observable.

Portable toilets

If single cubicle type portable toilets are utilised hand wash facilities should be provided separately, and not within, the toilet cubicle. However, these facilities must be:

- immediately adjacent to the toilet facilities,
- easily visible from the toilet facilities,
- do not require hand opening of door to exit wash area, and
- protected from the weather and animals.

3.3 Alcohol based hand rub (ABHR)

Alcohol based hand rubs should be provided in addition to hand washing facilities. They may be in the form of rubs, gels or foams and should have an alcohol content greater than 60%. Ideally the manufacturer's recommended volume of solution required will be dispensed in a single 'pump' as many people will not make the effort to pump multiple times. Consideration should be given to the number of alcohol based hand rub units provided and their timely replenishment/replacement. It is recommended that alcohol based hand rub is provided in the following locations:

- at entrances and exits to the mass gathering,
- at entrances and exits to workforce breakout areas,
- in queuing areas,

- adjacent to food vendors and eating areas, and
- in areas where it is likely hands may become contaminated

Safe placement

- ABHR dispensers should be placed within proximity of active sprinklers if the event venue is furnished with carpet.
- ABHR dispensers should not be placed near potential sources of ignition like electrical switches, power points, heat sources and electrical motors due to the risk of vapor igniting.
- Clear instructions for ABHR use should be displayed at dispenser points and warning not to smoke near dispensers or use excessive amount of ABHR.
- Adhere to manufacturer's installation recommendations to prevent spill, leak and pedestrians to slip in the event of ABHR spillage.
- ABHR maximum size should not exceed 500 mls and there should not be more than 80 dispensers installed within 1 smoke compartment.

Note: Do **not** provide alcohol based hand rub immediately adjacent to a hand washing facility to avoid any confusion between soap and alcohol based hand hygiene products.

The use of ABHR does not remove the need for hand washing. However, it is an acceptable alternative to hand washing and can be used in the following circumstances providing hands are visibly clean:

- for routine cleaning of hands,
- before and after eating,
- after touching animals,
- after nose blowing or sneezing into hands,
- after contact with contaminated objects in the environment,
- before and after caring for, or having contact with, someone who is very sick, very old or very young, and
- whenever there is a need to decontaminate hands.

Note: ABHR should not be used after going to the toilet, when hands are visibly soiled or when hands are wet.

The recommended steps for using an alcohol based hand rub are:

- dispense an amount of the product as per label directions into a cupped hand,
- rub palms, back of hands, fingers, thumbs and wrists until hands are dry

The World Health Organisation has produced a poster that explains the [hand rub process](#)

3.4 Hand hygiene promotion

Hand hygiene should be promoted along with provision or display of educational materials relating to effective hand hygiene. Consideration should be made of the target audience. At a mass gathering with international attendees, easily recognised symbols and pictures may be more effective than written text.

Train staff and volunteers to understand the need for effective hand hygiene and behaviours they should demonstrate to minimise risk. Inclusion of the [hand washing video](#) from Queensland Health in pre-event orientation is recommended.

Highly visible promotional messages reminding people to perform hand hygiene should be placed in areas such as:

- workforce breakout areas,
- toilets,
- food consumption and preparation areas,
- queuing areas,
- areas where hands are likely to become contaminated,
- ticketing areas,
- promotional webpages, and
- any information booklets provided for staff, volunteers, spectators, or participants.

Instructional hand hygiene educational material such as posters should be prominently displayed at hand washing facilities and ABHR dispensing points for the benefit of users. The Queensland Health [handwashing poster](#) and World Health Organisation [hand rub poster](#) can be used in these locations.

Drinking water stations should be signed 'not for hand washing'

3.5 Food handlers

Effective hand hygiene is especially important for food handlers to reduce the risk of introducing pathogens to food and spreading illness to large numbers of people. *The Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code* (the Code) places responsibility on food handlers to wash their hands using the hand wash facilities provided whenever their hands are likely to contaminate food. Further information on food handler hygiene can be found at [Health and hygiene responsibilities of food handlers](#) which explains certain requirements of [Standard 3.2.2](#) of the Code - *Food Safety Practices and General Requirements*.

3.6 Food businesses

The Code places responsibility on food businesses to provide adequately situated and provisioned hand washing facilities for the exclusive use of food handlers. Further information on this can be found at [Standard 3.2.2](#) of the Code - *Food Safety Practices and General Requirements* and [Standard 3.2.3](#) of the Code - *Food Premises and Equipment*. Information explaining these responsibilities can be found at [Health and hygiene responsibilities of food business](#)

Licensed fixed and temporary food businesses within Queensland are subject to their local council requirements regarding hand washing facilities which can be found at [licensing requirements for temporary food premises](#) and [licensing requirements for fixed food premises](#).

4. Definitions of terms used in the guideline

Term	Definition / Explanation / Details	Source
Hand washing	The action of hand cleansing using soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub.	https://www.hha.org.au/hand-hygiene/what-is-hand-hygiene
Alcohol Based Hand Rub (ABHR)	The hand washing product of choice in hand cleansing.	https://www.hha.org.au/hand-hygiene/alcohol-based-handrubs

5. References and resources

Hand Hygiene Australia. (2018, August). *Hand Hygiene Australia*. Retrieved from www.hha.org.au: <https://www.hha.org.au/>

World Health Organization. (2018, August). *Alcohol-Based Handrub Risks/Hazards*. Retrieved from [www.who.int](http://www.who.int/gpsc/tools/faqs/abhr2/en/): <http://www.who.int/gpsc/tools/faqs/abhr2/en/>

World Health Organization. (2018, August). *Public Health for Mass Gatherings: Key Considerations*. Retrieved from [www.who.int](http://www.who.int/ihr/publications/WHO_HSE_GCR_2015.5/en/): http://www.who.int/ihr/publications/WHO_HSE_GCR_2015.5/en/

6. Document approval details

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7. Version control

Version	Date	Prepared by	Comments / reason for update
1.0	August 2018	GCHHS-PHU and CDIM	New Document