



Cornell University

Cornell Center for Animal Resources and Education

CARE713.01 Hygiene-Hand Washing

The intent of this standard operating procedure (SOP) is to describe the process for reduction of microorganisms that result from handling animals &/or objects in animal facilities. This SOP is intended for use by all personnel that enter animal facilities. This SOP is approved by the Cornell Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and the Cornell Center for Animal Resources and Education (CARE). Any exemption must be approved by the IACUC prior to its application.

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1. Introduction

Hand washing is the most important procedure for infection control. It reduces the number of transient organisms on the skin surface. Hand washing should be conducted before eating, immediately after handling a potentially sick animal, after removing gloves, and after contact with animals or any items that are contaminated with their dander, feces or body fluids.

2. Materials

- A sink with running water, and if available, a hand-free activated faucet
- Soap, preferably mild liquid soap in a pump bottle.
NOTE: When bar soap is used, use soap racks to facilitate drainage.
- Disposable paper towels
- Trash can
- Nail brush (optional)

Note: When a sink is not readily available, alcohol based waterless hand sanitizers may be substituted, but your hands should be washed with soap and water as soon as possible.

3. Procedure

- A. Turn water on
- B. Wet hands

- C. Dispense ~5 mL of soap (about the size of a silver dollar) into the palm of one hand.
- D. Rub hands together vigorously for at least 15 seconds. Pay particular attention to nails. Use a nail brush if desired.
- E. Rinse thoroughly under running water, rubbing hands together vigorously.
 - i) When liquid soap is used, clean the dispenser frequently (e.g. weekly) to minimize accumulation of dirt and debris.
 - ii) When bar soap is used, rinse the soap bar free of dirt and debris after each use.
- F. Dry hands with a clean paper towel
- G. Turn off the water using the paper towel as a barrier between the handle and your clean hand.
- H. Dispose of paper towel in the trash can

Note: When decontaminating hands with an alcohol-based hand rub, remove obvious debris and apply product to the palm of one hand and rub hands together, covering all surfaces of hands and fingers, until hands are dry.

I. Skin Care

Use hand lotions or creams to minimize the occurrence of irritant contact dermatitis associated with frequent hand antisepsis or hand washing.

4. Safety-NA

5. Contingencies-NA

6. References

- A. Handwashing, An easy way to prevent infection; Mayo Clinic.com:
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/hand-washing/HQ00407>
- B. CDC Hand Hygiene Recommendations;
http://www.einstein.edu/rx_files/education/cme/hh_cdcguidelines10017.pdf
- C. Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories (BMBL) 5th Edition; CDC and NIH; February 2007:
<http://www.cdc.gov/od/ohs/biosfty/bmb15/bmb15toc.htm>

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Luce Guanzini
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