

OFFICIAL

SA Health

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Hand Hygiene Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Clinical Guideline

Version 2.0

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Government
of South Australia

SA Health

Hand Hygiene Clinical Guideline

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Hand Hygiene Clinical Guideline

1. Title of clinical guideline

Hand Hygiene Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Clinical Guideline v2.0

2. Key points

- > The [Infection Prevention and Control and Healthcare Associated Infection \(HAI\) Surveillance and Reporting Policy](#) is the parent policy to this Hand Hygiene clinical guideline and aligns with the mandatory requirements as per the National Safety and Quality in Health Service (NSQHS) Standards, in accordance with the SA Health Accreditation Policy.
- > Key requirements include performing hand hygiene as per the 5 moments, using alcohol-based hand rub at point of care, no artificial nails, minimal jewellery.

3. Clinical Guideline statement

3.1 Purpose of guideline

The purpose of this clinical guideline is to provide exemplar information about the principles of hand hygiene and the availability of recommended guidelines which support best practice as part of an overarching infection prevention and control program.

The Australian Commission for Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC) provides information regarding hand hygiene and hand hygiene programs for health service organisations being accredited to the [National Safety and Quality Health Service \(NSQHS\) Standards](#).

As per the NSQHS Standards, a hygiene program is to be consistent with the current [National Hand Hygiene Initiative](#) (NHHI) and the service organisation demonstrate that it uses the results of audits to improve hand hygiene compliance.

Monitoring as a key performance indicator of patient safety and quality of healthcare delivery should occur (as applicable) as per the SA Health [Performance framework](#) and national requirements as per the [Australian Institute for Health and Welfare \(AIHW\)](#).

3.2 Scope of guideline

This clinical guideline applies to all employees and contractors of SA Health that is all employees and contractors of the Department for Health and Wellbeing, Local Health Networks (including statewide clinical services aligned with those Networks) and SA Ambulance Service.

4. Background

As part of the World Health Organization's First Global Patient Safety Challenge, the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality (ACSQHC) in Health Care established the National Hand Hygiene Initiative (NHHI) and previously engaged Hand Hygiene Australia to implement a culture change program into all health services throughout Australia. The ACSQHC now manages the NHHI program. South Australia is supporting this initiative by including hand hygiene compliance as a key performance indicator of patient safety and quality of health care delivery. Hand hygiene is a key strategy in the prevention of health care associated infection.

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5. Definitions, acronyms and abbreviations

Definitions

Alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR):	means an alcohol-containing preparation (liquid, gel or foam) designed for application to the hands in order to reduce the number of viable microorganisms with maximum efficacy and speed.
Statewide services	includes Statewide Clinical Support Services, Prison Health, SA Dental Service, BreastScreen SA and any other state-wide services that fall under the governance of the Local Health Networks.
Surgical hand preparation	means the process of eliminating transient and reducing resident flora prior to surgery. This comprises removal of hand jewellery, performing hand hygiene with liquid soap if hands are visibly soiled, removing debris from underneath fingernails and scrubbing hands and forearms using a suitable antimicrobial formulation.

Abbreviations

ACSQHC	Australian Commission for Safety and Quality in Health Care
AIHW	Australian Institute for Health and Welfare
NSQHS	National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards

Acronyms

NHHI	National Hand Hygiene Initiative
TGA	Therapeutic Goods Administration

6. Clinical guidance

6.1 Hand Hygiene best practice guidance

The ACSQHC [Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control in Healthcare and National Hand Hygiene Initiative Implementation Guide](#) provide evidence based best practice guidance regarding hand hygiene and associated programs.

Also refer to manufacturer's instructions, product safety data sheets, [Therapeutic Goods Administration](#) (TGA) advice and local policy and procedures as applicable.

The ACSQHC provides resources to help organisations decide whether they meet the requirements of NSQHS Standards, including the [NSQHS Standard Accreditation Workbook](#).

6.2 General information

The [Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare](#), provides key information relating to hand hygiene, including:

- > Importance of hand hygiene
- > When hand hygiene should be performed e.g. [5 moments for hand hygiene](#)
- > Hand hygiene techniques, including "bare below the elbows" principles
- > Hand drying

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- > Hand care
- > Selection of hand hygiene products
- > Hand hygiene product dispensers
- > Skin care
- > Fire risk

6.3 Implementation of hand hygiene

Supporting information is available from the [ACSQHC NHHI Implementation Guide](#), including:

- > Promoting the use of alcohol-based rub at the point of care.
- > Ensuring standardised hand hygiene and infection control education.
- > Monitoring hand hygiene compliance and providing feedback as part of a quality improvement approach.
- > Identifying targeted opportunities for improving hand hygiene compliance, including hand hygiene cultural change programs such as bare below the elbows. However, the NHHI state there is a limited amount of evidence to support this as a formal recommendation. WHO recommends that long sleeves be avoided. Long sleeves have been found to be contaminated with organisms and can impede appropriate hand hygiene. LHNs may consider this initiative based on local risk assessment.
- > SA Health recommends:
 - Prior to working in a clinical area, healthcare workers and staff having direct contact with the patient or the patient's environment, to remove all hand and wrist jewellery (a single, plain, non-porous ring is exempt – refer to local policies and procedures) including wrist watches and fitness bands.
 - Healthcare workers and staff who have direct contact with patients need to ensure that nails are clean, short and unvarnished. Artificial nails or embellishments (of any type) are not to be worn by clinicians.
 - When direct patient contact occurs arms should be bare below the elbows to enable adequate hand hygiene of the hands and forearms. Long sleeves are not recommended, but if worn then sleeves are required to be rolled up or pushed back securely above the elbows.
 - Healthcare facilities risk assess the use of long ties and lanyards and consider alternatives as indicated such as retractable (or similar) ID card holders. Where ties/lanyards are worn, these should be secured before patient contact to reduce the risk of contamination.
 - It is important to support good skin integrity, include practices such as adherence to recommended hand hygiene practices, the application of recommended/approved hand lotion/creams and covering abrasions and cuts with a non-permeable occlusive dressing.
 - Staff with skin integrity issues such as dermatitis that may impede performing hand hygiene should be referred to Clinical Worker Health (or equivalent as applicable – i.e. IPC team) to determine the most appropriate approach. Where there is difficulty managing a skin integrity issue, further options may need to be discussed with the line manager, an occupational health medical practitioner, general practitioner or dermatologist if required.
- > Note: In emergency situations, i.e. roadside assistance by SA Ambulance Service staff or Medstar emergency evacuations, some parts of the procedure, such as rolling up sleeves, may not be applicable due to safety considerations; refer to local guidelines.

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6.4 Health Service organisations

Applicable organisations are responsible for operationalising the requirements of the NSQHS Standards and Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control in Healthcare and are recommended to have processes for hand hygiene that:

- > Have documented procedures covering the following:
 - hand hygiene technique using alcohol-based hand rubs and liquid soap
 - surgical hand preparation
 - hand and nail care
 - artificial nail, nail polish and hand jewellery

- > Has a hand hygiene program that:
 - is consistent with the current National Hand Hygiene Initiative, and jurisdictional requirements as per the guideline.
 - addresses noncompliance or inconsistency with the current National Hand Hygiene Initiative.

The [SA Health Hand Hygiene competency tool](#) is available to assess staff competency in carrying out an effective hand hygiene rub or handwash.

The SA Health [Safety Learning System](#) and [Clinical Incident Management and Open Disclosure](#) can be used to demonstrate improvement in reporting and management of incidents related to breaches in hand hygiene.

All potential risks and hazards associated with the performance of procedures requiring hand hygiene should be identified, actioned, documented and reported to the Local Health Network's risk management unit (or equivalent), and the appropriate hazard controls applied. The effectiveness of the risk controls should be regularly assessed.

7. Associated policies / guidelines / clinical guidelines / resources

- > [Australian Institute for Health and Welfare \(AIHW\)](#).
- > ACSQHC [Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control in Healthcare](#)
- > ACSQHC [National Hand Hygiene Initiative Implementation Guide](#)
- > NSQHS [Standard Accreditation Workbook](#).
- > SA Health [Performance framework](#)
- > SA Health [Hand hygiene in the healthcare environment](#)
- > SA Health [Hand hygiene](#)
- > SA Health [Infection Prevention and Control: Exemplar Audits to support the NSQHS standard toolkit](#)
- > SA Health [Safety Learning System](#) webpage
- > SA Health [Clinical incident management and open disclosure](#) webpage
- > WHO [guidelines on hand hygiene in healthcare](#)

8. Appendices

Nil

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9. Document Ownership and History

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Approval Date	Version	Who approved New/Revised Version	Reason for Change
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25/02/2014	V1.1	Safety & Quality Strategic Governance Committee	Minor changes, references and updated SA Health template
27/09/2012	V1.0	Safety & Quality Strategic Governance Committee	Original