

Common Hand Hygiene Methods Compared



Hand hygiene is one of the most important aspects of your Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOPs). There are a few common methods widely used to wash hands. Each method has its benefits, but some have crucial drawbacks that can result in poor handwashing and pathogen spread. Here are some of the most common methods used today and the pros and cons of each:

	Meets Regulatory Standards	Hygiene Event / Compliance Tracking	Consistent	Kills Pathogens	Removes Pathogens	cGMP Procedure	Throughput	Water Consumption	Solution Quantity Used	Good for Hand Health	Onboarding / Training
Manual Faucet Sinks	👍	👎	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	👍	=
Knee / Foot Pedal Sinks	👍	👎	=	=	=	=	=	👎	=	👍	=
Multi-User Fountain or Trough Sinks	👍	👎	=	=	=	=	=	👎	=	👍	=
Semi-Automated Photo-Eye Sinks	👍	👎	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	👍	=
Automated Handwashing Stations	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍
Instant Hand Sanitizers	👍	👎	=	👍	👎	=	👍	N/A	👍	👎	👍
Hand Dip Pans / Buckets	=	👎	👍	=	👎	👍	👍	N/A	👍	👎	👍

Manual Handwashing

Sink, a soap dispenser and a drying method such as paper towels or forced air.

Benefits

- Low cost
- Familiar system to all

Potential Concerns

- Highly dependent on user liquid waste
- Unreliable and inconsistent level of pathogen removal
- No compliance tracking
- Water used may never come in contact with hands
- Cross contamination touch points on faucet handles
- Can be used for activities other than handwashing, such as the dumping of
- Increased time on onboarding or retraining on proper handwashing steps
- No indication if soap solution is empty

Automated Handwashing Stations

Guarantees standardized, fast, effective, and trackable handwashing events.

Benefits

- 12 second wash time / high-throughput
- Easy compliance monitoring
- Automation ensures reliable & consistent result
- Clinically-validated to remove more than 99.9% of pathogens during each and every handwash
- Up to 75% water savings compared to traditional handwashing, uses only 0.6 gallons per hand wash
- Quick and easy to use for training
- Soap empty indication

Potential Concerns

- Slightly higher priced than industrial sinks
- New technology can be unfamiliar to some individuals



Semi-Automated Handwashing Stations

Hands-free faucet and soap dispenser.

Benefits

- Reduces cross-contamination with less touch points
- Low cost
- Familiar system to most

Potential Concerns

- Increased time on onboarding or retraining on proper handwashing steps
- Highly dependent on user
- Unreliable and inconsistent level of pathogen removal
- No compliance tracking
- Water used may never come in contact with hands
- No way to enforce proper
- handwashing duration.
- Low water flow is common
- Can be used as a dump sink
- Inconsistent operation due to photoeye hand detection
- No indication if soap solution is empty

Instant Hand Sanitizer

Quick and effective way of killing harmful pathogens on your hands.

Benefits

- Low cost
- Does not require water source
- Quick to use for high throughput
- Easy to use and train new users
- Mobile / portable

Potential Concerns

- Does not remove soils and debris
- Required large volume of sanitizer to be effective
- Frequent use can be detrimental to skin health
- Emollients can build up over time leaving hands feeling uncomfortable
- Doesn't remove all pathogens, only kills some pathogens

Hand Dip Pans / Buckets

Archaic method of hand sanitation that is not recommended for today's best practices.

Benefits

- Low cost
- Does not require water source

Potential Concerns

- Does not remove visible soils or debris
- Visible soils and debris can build up inside the bucket
- Sanitation PPM can deplete over time
- Frequent use can be detrimental to skin health
- Not as effective as soap & water against some pathogens