



ASSIST

AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL SCIENCE
INFORMATION SUPPORT FOR
TEACHERS AND TECHNICIANS

Published on ASSIST (<https://assist.asta.edu.au>)

[Home](#) > Hand sanitiser

Hand sanitiser

Posted by Anonymous on Tue, 2020-05-26 10:32

Hand sanitiser: An SDS for the hand sanitiser our school has purchased states "Keep out of reach of children". I have been asked to find out about this statement and what the school should do to make sure they are doing the right thing as we are a Prep-12 school. Does this mean that in the junior school all hand sanitiser supplied by the school is used under supervision and this is not necessary for senior students?

Voting:



No votes yet

Year Level:

Foundation

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

Senior Secondary

Laboratory Technicians:

Laboratory Technicians

Showing 1-1 of 1 Responses

Hand sanitiser

Submitted by sat on 26 May 2020

The main hazards associated with the use of alcohol-based hand sanitisers are:

- Flammability due to the 70% alcohol component
- Possible poisoning due to ingestion

Flammability:

Due to the high alcohol content, it is highly flammable. A good document regarding this is [Safety considerations for alcohol-based hand sanitisers](#), which contains the following advice:

Actions required

1. Keep hand sanitisers out of reach of children.
2. Keep containers tightly closed when not in use.
3. Keep away from heat, sparks, open flames, hot surfaces etc. No smoking.
4. Use hand sanitisers in a ventilated space – do not use liquid sanitiser inside confined spaces without plenty of ventilation when applying (e.g. inside cars without windows down).
5. Do not keep hand sanitisers inside cars during warm or hot weather.
6. Keep away from oxidising agents (e.g. granulated pool chlorine).
7. Hand sanitiser dispensers should not be placed above or close to potential sources of ignition, such as light switches and electrical outlets, or next to oxygen cylinders, due to the increased risk of vapour igniting.¹

Poison aspects:

There have been a number of calls to the NSW Poisons Information Centre regarding the ingestion of hand sanitiser by young children, see '[Hand sanitiser safety and children](#)', where they state the following:

“Hand sanitiser products should be stored safely and out of reach of children. When they are used by young children it should be under the supervision of an adult. Washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is also a safe and effective option to help combat COVID-19,” Ms Adamo said.

*Consumers are reminded to be aware of imported products which may not be clearly labelled and may contain more toxic alcohols such as methanol that make the product more dangerous.*²

The school setting:

Given the school's responsibility and their duty of care to students, we recommend that all hand sanitiser supplied by the school is used under the supervision of an adult for the following reasons:

- Young children need supervision to ensure that they apply only an appropriate amount and that they don't try to consume it
- Older students also need supervision to ensure that they
 - apply only an appropriate amount (whilst most students may be well behaved, it is possible that some unsupervised students may dispense an excessive amount of hand sanitiser, more than they require)
 - don't put themselves at risk of it catching alight if it is still moist on their skin and they are in high risk areas such as science or home economics where they may be exposed to open flames or sparks (E.g. Bunsen burners, open flames on stove tops)

We also recommend that your school

- carefully considers the storage of hand sanitiser in the school in general
- considers the suitability of its use in the science or other high risk areas, given its flammability
- includes it in your chemical register, obtains the current SDS and ensures it is readily accessible to workers
- provides the necessary information, instruction and training to staff regarding its safe storage and use.

The use of hand sanitiser in the science area

In a previous Q&A: [Making hand sanitiser](#), we say:

“Flammable liquids need to be appropriately stored (i.e. in a flammable liquid cabinet) when not in use. When they are in use in the science area, they should not be used in the vicinity of an open (or naked) flame.

If a school chooses to use hand sanitiser in the science area, it should have systems in place, identified by a risk assessment, to ensure that it is suitably used and stored. No residual alcohol should be on the skin from the use of hand sanitiser near the presence of open (naked) flames.”³

References and further reading:

[1] Western Australia Department of Mines, Industry, Regulation and Safety. 14 April 2020. Dangerous Goods Safety Bulletin No. 0120. *Safety considerations for alcohol-based hand sanitisers*. Department of Mines, Industry, Regulation and Safety website, https://www.dmp.wa.gov.au/Documents/Dangerous-Goods/DGS_SB_0120.pdf (Accessed via 'Dangerous goods safety alerts', Department of Mines, Industry, Regulation and Safety website, <https://www.dmp.wa.gov.au/Safety/Dangerous-goods-safety-alerts-13195.aspx>)

² 'Hand sanitiser safety and children', New South Wales Health Department website, https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/news/Pages/20200412_01.aspx (12 April 2020)

³ 'Making hand sanitiser', Science ASSIST Q&A, Science ASSIST website, <https://assist.asta.edu.au/content/4561/making-hand-sanitiser> (March 2020)

'Alcohol-Based Handrub Risks/Hazards', The World health Organisation website, <https://www.who.int/gpsc/tools/faqs/abhr2/en/> (Accessed 22 May 2020)

'Fire hazards when manufacturing or storing alcohol-based hand sanitiser', WorkSafe Victoria website, <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/safety-alerts/fire-hazards-when-manufact...> (30 April 2020)

'Hand sanitisers: Information for consumers', Australian Government Department of Health Therapeutic Goods Administration website, <https://www.tga.gov.au/hand-sanitisers-information-consumers> (15 May 2020)

'Registers, manifests and placards', Safe Work Australia website, <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/registers-manifests-and-placards> (Accessed 26 May 2020)

'Safety Data Sheet requirements for hand sanitisers in the workplace', WorkSafe Queensland website, <https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/coronavirus/workplace-risk-management-b/...> (01 May 2020)

Source URL: <https://assist.asta.edu.au/question/4583/hand-sanitiser>