



STANDARD 3.021

HANDWASHING PROCEDURE

Children and staff members shall wash their hands using the following method:

- a) Check to be sure a clean, disposable paper (or single-use cloth) towel is available.
- b) Turn on warm water, no less than 60 degrees F and no more than 120 degrees F, to a comfortable temperature.
- c) Moisten hands with water and apply liquid soap to hands.
- d) Rub hands together vigorously until a soapy lather appears, and continue for at least 10 seconds. Rub areas between fingers, around nailbeds, under fingernails, jewelry, and back of hands.
- e) Rinse hands under running water, no less than 60 degrees F and no more than 120 degrees F, until they are free of soap and dirt. Leave the water running while drying hands.
- f) Dry hands with the clean disposable paper or single use cloth towel.
- g) If taps do not shut off automatically, turn taps off with a disposable paper or single use cloth towel.
- h) Throw the disposable paper towel into a lined hands-free trash container; or place single-use cloth towels in the laundry hamper; or hand individually labeled cloth towels to dry. Use hand lotion to prevent chapping of hands, if desired.

RATIONALE: Running water over the hands removes soil, including infection-causing organisms. Wetting the hands before applying soap helps to create a lather that can loosen soil. The soap lather loosens soil and brings it into solution on the surface of the skin. Rinsing the lather off into a sink removes the soil from the hands that the soap brought into solution. Warm water, no less than 60 degrees F and no more than 120 degrees F, is more comfortable than cold water; using warm water promotes adequate rinsing during handwashing.

Children and staff members should use liquid soap. Although adequately drained bar soap has not been incriminated in transmission of bacteria; bar soaps sitting in water have been shown to be heavily contaminated with *Pseudomonas* and other bacteria. Many children do not have the dexterity to handle a bar of soap. Many adults and children do not take the time to rinse the soil they have applied to the soap bar before putting down the soap bar.

By using a paper towel to turn off the water faucet, people who have just completed handwashing prevent recontamination of their hands.

Adapted from Caring For Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards