

## **OSHA Training Toolbox Talk: Biological Hazards – Handwashing Tips to Avoid Disease-causing Germs**

*[Reference: Paragraph (5)(a)(1) of OSHA Act of 1970 / Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) Guidelines]*

Many germs that cause intestinal diseases, such as salmonella and e-coli, are spread by contact when contaminated matter gets on a person's hands, which then gets transferred to their own, or someone else's, eyes, nose, or mouth. Similarly, germs that cause many respiratory diseases can be passed along the same way when a person touches an object or surface harboring contaminated matter after someone else who is infected coughed or sneezed on it. Therefore, thoroughly washing your hands is one of the most important steps you can take to help prevent contracting infectious bacteria and viruses, as well as to avoid spreading them to others.

While washing hands is not rocket science, there are several important steps that can help us better remove potential disease-causing contaminants from our hands, as outlined below:

- **Wet your hands with clean, running water, either warm or cold, and then apply soap.** Using soap to wash hands is more effective than using water alone, because the cleaning agents in soap lift soil and microbes from skin. Plus, most people tend to scrub their hands more thoroughly when using soap versus water alone, which removes more germs.
- **Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap.** Microbes are present on all areas of the hand, especially underneath the fingernails, so the entire hand should be scrubbed. Lathering and scrubbing your hands together creates friction, which helps lift dirt, grease, and microbes from the skin. Be sure to scrub the front and back of each hand, in-between your fingers and around your thumbs, and underneath your fingernails.
- **Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds.** That is the minimum length of time recommended for handwashing, as evidence suggests that washing hands for 20 or more seconds removes more germs from hands than when washing for shorter periods of time.
- **Rinse your hands well under clean, running water to rinse off the contaminated matter.** Hands could become re-contaminated if rinsed in a basin of standing water that has been contaminated through previous use, So, always rinse hands under clean, running water. Rinsing the soap away also helps to minimize skin irritation.
- **Dry your hands using a clean disposable towel, or air dry them.** This is necessary because any remaining germs can be transferred more easily to and from wet hands.

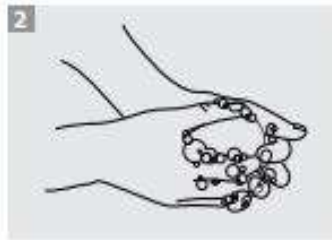
These tips, plus a few additional details and instructions from the CDC, are outlined on the handout accompanying this toolbox talk.

Are there any questions about today's toolbox talk on recommended handwashing techniques? Thank you for your attendance today. Please be sure to sign the training certification form to ensure you get credit for attending today's toolbox training session.

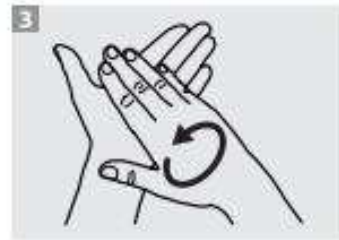
# PROPER HANDWASHING TECHNIQUES



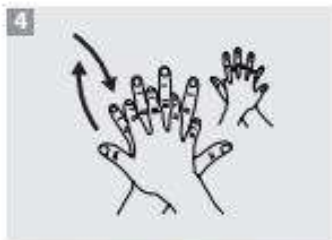
Wet hands with water.



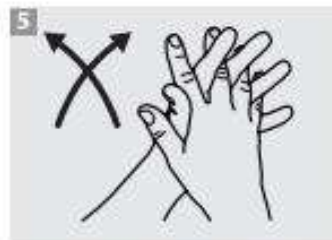
Apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces.



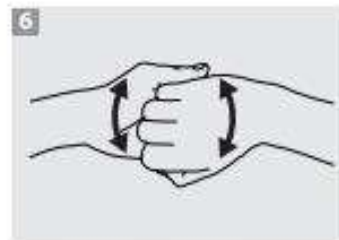
Rub hands together in a circle.



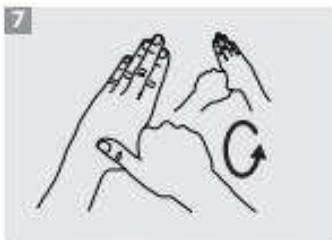
Put one palm on top the other hand and rub soap up and down.



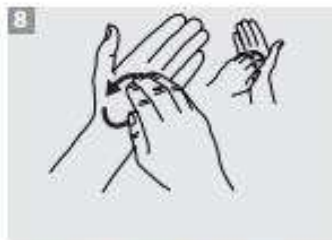
Put palms and fingers together and rub soap up and down.



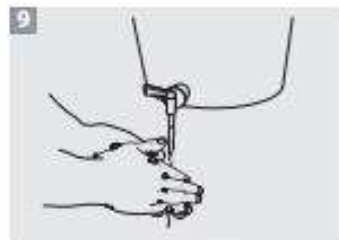
Put fingers of both hands together and rub soap up and down.



Clean thumbs by rubbing each one around several times with the other palm.



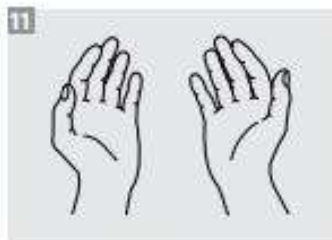
Clean both palms by rubbing soap around palm with fingers of the other hand.



Rinse hands with water.



Dry hands completely using a single use towel.



Your hands are now clean.

Source: CDC