



Hygiene and control of infection in the workplace

Workplace hygiene refers to the cleanliness standards of equipment, work areas and persons that are in place to provide a healthy working environment for all. In conjunction with regular hygiene concerns, Guide Dogs controls the hygiene risks associated with working with dogs.

Reducing the risk of infection and illness from bacteria, germs and viruses in the workplace can be managed by work area cleanliness, clean welfare and kitchen facilities, and personal hygiene.

This document provides detail on what is already in place within Guide Dogs and what you can do to reduce the risk of infections.

Risk assessments

Our overarching risk assessments have identified activities where infection/contamination risks are present and measures to control these risks.

Universal precautions

Our stance is that everyone should practice ‘universal precautions’ throughout the organisation. This means you should treat all bodily fluids as if infected with HIV, hepatitis, other blood-borne pathogens, COVID and any other communicable infectious disease.

Premises cleaning and hygiene

- Regular scheduled daily cleaning is in place at all of our site’s welfare and work areas, internal and external
- Cleaning items are available on all sites and staff are encouraged to use them to clean workstations and equipment prior to use

- Restrooms and handwashing areas are kept stocked with soap and appropriate hand drying facilities
- Notices showing correct handwashing techniques are displayed in restrooms and work areas
- Sanitiser stations are located throughout the building and those on site are encouraged to use them
- A specific cleaning and hygiene policy is in place for all dog areas of our premises
- Where possible, there are dog kitchens specifically for dog related equipment/activities. Where this is not possible robust procedures are in place to ensure high levels of hygiene in multi-use kitchens

Fit for the workplace

To limit the spread of infections, staff are asked to refrain from coming into the workplace whilst they have symptoms of an infectious illness.

Personal hygiene at work

Bacteria, germs, and viruses can travel much further when you sneeze or cough, therefore you should cover your mouth and nose with disposable tissues when you cough or sneeze. Place used tissues in a bin and immediately wash your hands or use hand sanitiser. If you do not have a tissue, cough, or sneeze into the crook of your elbow, not into your hand.

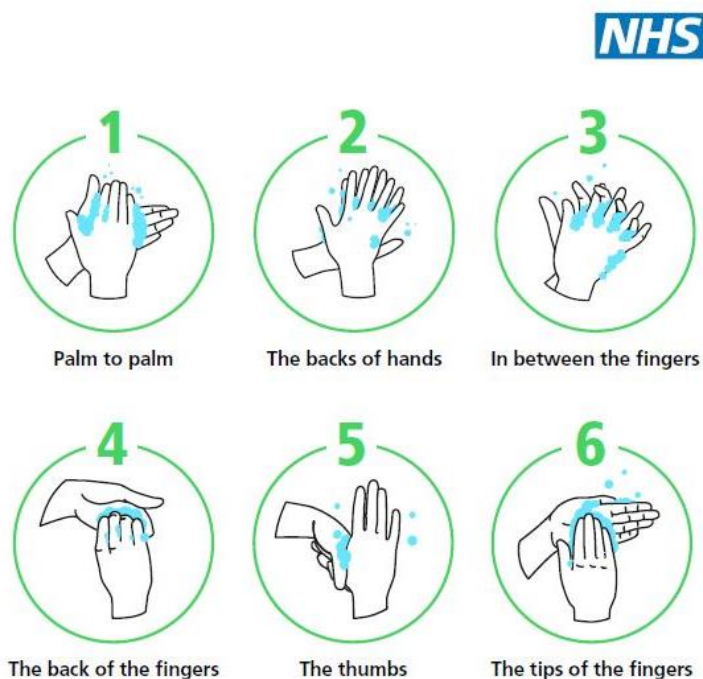
Hands touch many surfaces and can become contaminated with viruses and other germs. Once contaminated, hands can transfer these to your eyes, nose, or mouth. From there, they can enter your body and infect you. Washing or sanitising your hands removes viruses and other germs.

You should wash your hands:

- regularly throughout the day, not just when your hands are visibly dirty
- after coughing, sneezing, and blowing your nose
- before you eat or handle food
- after coming into contact with surfaces touched by many others, such as handrails, door handles, and shared areas such as kitchens and bathrooms
- following contact with animals or their faeces/bodily fluids

Handwashing step by step guidance

You should wash your hands for a minimum of 20 seconds



- Wet your hands and apply enough soap to cover your hands
- Rub your hands together, palm to palm
- Use one hand, palm on back of hand, and rub the back of the other hand and clean in between the fingers. Do the same with the other hand
- Rub your hands together, palm to palm, and clean in between your fingers
- Rub the back of your fingers against your palms
- Rub your thumb using your other hand. Do the same with the other thumb
- Rub the tips of your fingers on the palm of your other hand. Do the same with other hand
- Rinse well with clean water
- Dry your hands completely

Ventilation

The amounts of bacteria, germs and viruses in the air can build up in poorly ventilated areas and this increases the risk of spreading infections. Bringing fresh air into a room by opening a door or a window or the use of artificial ventilation systems, even for a few minutes at a time, helps remove older

stale air that could contain bacteria, germs and virus particles and reduces the chance of spreading infections.

Increasing fresh air circulation helps to remove bacteria, germs, and viruses from a room quicker.

Guide Dogs' sites are set up to maximise fresh air flow via artificial systems or by opening doors and windows.

Personal protective equipment

Use appropriate disposable gloves/aprons during activities that require them - e.g. first aid, barrier nursing, cleaning bodily fluids. The relevant risk assessment and work processes will identify these for you. Dispose of waste, gloves, and aprons appropriately after use.

Use a resuscitation mouthpiece for CPR.

Dog handling

- Wash hands after handling the dog, preferably with an antibacterial soap/alcohol-based hand preparation and advising others who have contact with the dog to do the same
- Prevent and discourage dogs from licking hands and faces
- Avoid eating or drinking during the handling of the dog
- Although not always possible, it is recommended that disposable gloves are worn when handling faecal matter or other bodily fluids
- Always 'pick up' after your dog goes to the toilet
- Faecal matter should be bagged, the bag tied and placed in a suitable waste receptacle
- When out in public you should only place the waste bag into a dog waste bin. If the waste bag is to be put into your general waste receptacle, Guide Dogs recommend that you 'double bag' the waste
- Designated toilet areas used by the dog must be cleared after use, and in the case of toilet areas with a concrete or flag stone base, these should be cleaned with an appropriate disinfectant on a regular basis
- Any instruments that you use to clean away faecal matter must be cleaned after use, preferably with an appropriate disinfectant
- Any object that is contaminated by bodily fluids, blood or faecal matter should be cleaned using an appropriate disinfectant

- Solids should be removed from any material contaminated and then washed alone on a normal wash cycle in a washing machine or disposed of

Zoonotic diseases

Zoonotic is a type of disease that passes from an animal or insect to a human. Some do not make the animal sick but will cause illness in humans. Zoonotic diseases range from minor short-term illness to a major life-changing illness. Certain ones can even cause death.

Zoonoses can be transmitted:

- through the air
- by eating contaminated meat or produce
- through close contact with an infected animal
- by touching an area or surface that an infected animal touched
- through insect bites like mosquitos or ticks

Prevention tips

Zoonotic diseases are common everywhere in the world but there are many ways to prevent illness:

- Wash your hands properly and robustly
- Use insect repellent or other methods to keep mosquitos, fleas, and ticks away when working outside
- Be aware of areas where animals or insects might be when you are out in nature
- Check yourself for ticks when you have been outside
- Practice safe food handling. This includes washing off all produce before eating it
- Try to avoid being bitten or scratched by an animal, if this occurs you should wash the wound with an antibacterial agent and seek professional advice if required
- Have your pets vaccinated and take them for regular annual visits to the veterinarian
- Use appropriate flea and tick preventatives for your pets
- Do not eat, drink, or touch your eyes or mouth while you are handling or in close contact with animals
- Use disposable gloves/aprons if you need to handle an animal that is or appears to be sick
- Keep any areas where animals are kept clean and sanitary
- Do not handle or approach any animal that appears sick. Contact the authorities to report it

Employees and volunteers should seek medical advice on vaccination when first starting work at Guide Dogs or if you believe you may be at risk of having contracted an infectious/Zoonotic disease, hepatitis, tetanus etc.

Accidental contact with mucus/saliva/blood/faecal matter

The following should be followed in the event of accidental contact with a bodily fluid/solid.

- Splashes in mouth - wash out mouth with running water
- Splashes in eye - irrigate with a saline solution
- On hands - wash hands with antibacterial hand soap/alcohol-based hand preparation
- Clothing or other material - remove solids and wash contaminated item on its own in normal hot wash in washing machine or dispose of

Seek professional medical support if you are concerned or worried.

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