



## COVID-19: Guidance for Use of Expired Alcohol-Based Hand Sanitizer

March 14, 2020

These recommendations are based on what is currently known about the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and will be updated as needed and as additional information becomes available. This guidance is only applicable to hand-sanitizer products which contain 60-95% alcohol. Product manufacturer and company policies take precedence over this guidance.

**Intended audience:** DPH & CCSF Agencies, businesses, and individuals who are unable to obtain unexpired alcohol-based hand sanitizer (ABHS).

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Only provide ABHS where handwashing facilities are not available. Proper handwashing is considered to be more effective than ABHS because it physically removes soil and contaminants.
2. Prioritize unexpired ABHS for healthcare settings where a hand-hygiene policy applies and hygiene is being performed as part of patient care.
3. Give preference to expired ABHS with alcohol content  $\geq 70\%$ . Only use expired ABHS with 60-69% if there are no other options.
4. Check consistency of expired ABHS. ABHS includes gelling or foaming components designed to keep the alcohol in contact with the skin and slow evaporation. If the expired ABHS is “runny” rather than gel or foam-like, it should not be used.
5. Compare the drying time of the expired ABHS with unexpired product of the same type. If the expired ABHS takes significantly (2x or greater) longer to dry the alcohol component has evaporated and the product should not be used.
6. For full, unused containers of 70% alcohol (or greater) ABHS, check the volume of product. If the volume appears to have decreased by 10% or more significant evaporation of the alcohol component should be suspected and the products should not be used unless there are no other options.
7. Unusable ABHS will in many cases trigger regulatory requirements for disposal as hazardous waste.

### RESOURCES

#### CDC:

Show Me the Science – When & How to Use Hand Sanitizer in Community Settings

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/show-me-the-science-hand-sanitizer.html>

Guideline for Hand Hygiene in Health-Care Settings

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5116a1.htm>