

Hand Sanitizers

Guidance on the use of hand sanitizers in California public schools.

1. Good hand hygiene is vitally important in preventing the spread of the flu. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that students and staff wash their hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds or use a hand sanitizer, especially after coughing or sneezing.
2. California's Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the CDC recommend alcohol-based sanitizers as being effective to kill the flu virus. The CDC states other hand sanitizers that do not contain alcohol may be useful, however there is less evidence on their effectiveness compared to that on hand washing and alcohol-based sanitizers. Therefore, CDPH recommends alcohol-based sanitizers for use in schools.
3. There is no statute or regulation which prohibits schools from providing hand sanitizers for use by students and staff, especially in settings where soap and water are not readily available, such as portable classrooms. Many California schools are making hand sanitizers available to their students and staff.
4. Provisions of the *Education Code* relating to alcoholic beverages do not apply to alcohol-based sanitizers. Schools with "zero tolerance" or other policies forbidding alcohol are recommended to make an exception for alcohol-based sanitizers. Appropriate instruction and supervision in the use of sanitizers should, of course, always be given.
5. As always, school districts must cooperate with and follow orders issued by a local or state public health officer to protect public health.