



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
Aging and Long-Term Support Administration
PO Box 45600, Olympia, Washington 98504-5600

November 9, 2022

ALTSA: AFH #2022-050
HAND SANITIZER SAFETY

Dear Adult Family Home Provider:

This letter is to provide clarity about safe hand sanitizer use in compliance with infection control and safety and maintenance regulations in adult family homes (AFHs). WAC [388-76-10255](#) requires AFHs to implement an infection control system that includes nationally recognized infection control standards and frequent hand washing or other means of limiting the spread of infection. [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) *“recommends the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers as the primary method for hand hygiene in most healthcare situations. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers effectively reduce the number of germs that may be on the hands of healthcare workers.”*

However, WAC [388-76-10750](#) requires AFHs to keep toxic and hazardous substances, such as hand sanitizer, in locked storage. Providers should remember that WAC [388-76-10750](#) allows AFH residents who have been assessed as “safe to use the substance” to access and use the substance “without direct supervision” and “if the use is documented in the negotiated care plan.” This means:

- AFHs where all residents are assessed as “safe”, and the use is documented in all residents’ negotiated care plans may allow ready access to hand sanitizer. This might include keeping the hand sanitizer on a table or countertop for resident use.
- AFHs with one or more residents that are not safe to use hand sanitizer without direct supervision must ensure residents do not have unsupervised access to hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizer should be kept in locked storage when not under a caregiver’s control. Hand sanitizer in a caregiver's pocket is considered "under their control."

If you have any questions, please contact Colleen Jensen, Adult Family Home Policy Program Manager, at (564) 999-3182 or colleen.jensen1@dshs.wa.gov.

Sincerely,

Amy Abbott, Director
Residential Care Services

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