



Choosing hand sanitisers and surface disinfectants to use during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

As a member of the public, you may choose to use hand sanitisers and surface disinfectants for your own and your family's protection at home or elsewhere during the coronavirus pandemic.

As an employer, you may also choose to provide hand sanitiser and surface disinfectants for your workers or others to use. These are biocidal products and are regulated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Whether you are a member of the public or also an employer, you should ensure that the products you use are suitable.

How hand sanitisers and surface disinfectants are regulated

Biocidal products, such as hand sanitisers and surface disinfectants, are beginning to be regulated in the UK under the Biocidal Products Regulation (BPR) to make sure that when they are used properly, they do not harm people, pets or the wider environment.

The BPR will require that both biocidal products and the active substances they contain must be assessed and authorised or approved before they can be supplied and used.

Active substances (the ingredients that have the controlling effect on the harmful organism, such as bacteria) are currently undergoing a review process under the BPR, to assess their potential risks to people and the wider environment.

Once a review is completed and an active substance is approved, each individual product based on that active substance is then also assessed for authorisation under the regulation.

However, until an active substance completes that review process, HSE does not carry out an assessment of the effectiveness or risks from individual disinfectant products as they are not yet fully regulated under the BPR.

The product manufacturer or supplier named on the product label will be able to confirm if the active substance in their product has been supported for review under the BPR and whether it has not yet finished that review process.

Identifying suitable products

HSE cannot recommend any specific products. There are many alcohol- and non-alcohol-based hand sanitisers and surface disinfectants available on the UK market.

Our [database of authorised products](#)^[1] will help you find out which hand sanitiser and surface disinfectant products are suitable for your needs during the coronavirus pandemic. It provides information about products that have been authorised under the BPR in the UK.

The database also contains information about hand sanitiser products that are using the Critical Situation Permit issued by HSE under Article 55(1) of the BPR for the World Health Organisation (WHO)-specified formulation based on propan-2-ol or have been issued with their own permit for a different formulation.

If a product does not appear on our database, this does not necessarily mean it should not be used. The active substance could still be undergoing review so products based on that active substance would not yet require HSE authorisation.

For example, ethanol, which is used in many hand sanitiser products, has not yet finished the review process. Ethanol products can therefore continue to be used but they will not appear on our database as HSE will not have assessed or authorised them yet.

You should determine what your needs are and find a product that meets this need. If you are unsure if a product is suitable, discuss your requirements with the product manufacturers or suppliers.

Whether an employer decides to use an alcohol- or non-alcohol-based hand sanitiser should be based on their risk assessment and any sector specific guidance, eg from the Department of Health and Social Care or the Department for Education. You can find more information on [GOV.UK's coronavirus pages](#)^[2].

Safety and effectiveness of products

Product manufacturers and suppliers are responsible for ensuring that their products are suitably effective, including meeting any necessary testing standards, so it is recommended that you discuss your requirements with product manufacturers to determine if a product meets your needs.

Product manufacturers and suppliers are also responsible for providing information and instructions for the user on the product label. You must always make sure that you read and understand the label before using a product and follow the label instructions carefully to ensure that you are using the product safely and effectively.

There is information about the BPR regulatory requirements for [supplying and manufacturing hand sanitiser and surface disinfectants during the coronavirus pandemic](#)^[3].

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Next review due: 9 December 2020

Related content

- [Managing risk and risk-assessment at work](#)^[4]
- [Working safely during the coronavirus pandemic](#)^[5]
- [Supplying and manufacturing hand sanitiser and surface disinfectants during the pandemic](#)^[6]
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Link URLs in this page

1. database of authorised products
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/biocides/eu-bpr/authorised-approved-biocides.htm>
2. GOV.UK's coronavirus pages
<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
3. supplying and manufacturing hand sanitiser and surface disinfectants during the coronavirus pandemic
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/hand-sanitiser/index.htm>
4. Managing risk and risk-assessment at work
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/index.htm>
5. Working safely during the coronavirus pandemic
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/index.htm>
6. Supplying and manufacturing hand sanitiser and surface disinfectants during the pandemic
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/hand-sanitiser/index.htm>

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