



A health and safety bulletin from

UI HealthWorks and WORKSAFE IOWA

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If We Could See Those Germs, We'd Wash!

Germs can live on our hands for up to 3 hours, and most of us are well aware that hand washing is the most effective way to thwart the spread of those germs. Yet something that seems so simple, and takes less than 30 seconds, is often overlooked or done improperly. For maximum hand-washing effectiveness:

- ◆ Wet your hands before applying any soap, to prevent irritation
- ◆ Don't forget to lather fingertips, crevices in between the fingers, and the back of the thumbs (the most frequently missed areas)
- ◆ Don't play favorites—right-handed people tend to clean their left hand better than their right, and vice-versa
- ◆ Wash for at least 20 seconds (or about as long as it takes to hum the Happy Birthday song twice)

Hand sanitizer, although effective in some situations, does not eliminate all types of germs and should not regularly be used in place of hand washing. Antibacterial soap is no more effective at killing germs than regular soap, and its use may even lead to the development of bacteria that are resistant to the product's antimicrobial agents, making it harder to kill these germs in the future. Finally, get 'em dry! Damp hands spread 1,000 times more germs than dry hands. And use a paper towel to open the restroom door when exiting to avoid exposing your hands to more germs.

CDC (Keeping Hands Clean) - www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/hand/handwashing.html

(Celebrate Global Handwashing Day) - www.cdc.gov/features/handwashing/

Mayo Clinic (Hand-washing: Do's and don'ts) - www.mayoclinic.com/health/hand-washing/HQ00407

Hire a STAR

Hiring the right employees is one of the most important steps in creating a positive and productive work environment. But it's not always easy to know who's most qualified for the job. That's where the STAR behavioral interviewing technique comes in. This technique asks interviewees to describe a specific situation (S) they experienced or a task (T) they needed to accomplish, the action (A) they took, and the results (R) that were achieved because of their actions. Dr. Steve Mickelson, Department Chair of the Department of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering at Iowa State University (ISU), says that ISU teaches its students to prepare for STAR interviewing because it helps them reflect on what they've done or learned that an employer would care about. "We always tell our students that without personal reflection there is no meaningful learning," Mickelson says. "STARs help students reflect upon the experiences they have had that make them marketable to an industry or organization."

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DOT Random Testing Rates Unchanged For 2012

The Department of Transportation's minimum drug and alcohol random testing rates for 2012 will remain the same as 2011. Employers subject to more than one DOT Agency drug and alcohol testing rule may still combine covered employees into a single random selection pool—but then must test at or above the highest rates of the agencies under whose jurisdiction they fall.

US DOT (Current Random Testing Rates) - www.dot.gov/odapc/rates.html

UI HealthWorks is a member of the WORKSAFE IOWA Occupational Medicine Associate Network, the only university-affiliated network of occupational health providers. WORKSAFE IOWA is an outreach program of the Department of Occupational and Environmental Health in the College of Public Health at the University of Iowa (www.public-health.uiowa.edu/worksafe).