

To: Forum Directors, Presidents, CEOs & Area Executives
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FLAMMABLE ALCOHOL BASED HAND SANITISER

An incident has been brought to our attention where hand sanitiser ignited shortly after being applied. The report below provides details on the incident and preventive actions.

Alcohol-based hand sanitiser warning

This report is in relation to an employee of a transport company who used alcohol-based hand gel sanitiser, as per the current recommendations for COVID-19 personal hygiene requirements.

After application, and before the liquid sanitiser had fully evaporated and dried, the individual touched a metal surface where a build-up of static electricity created an ignition source and the sanitiser ignited, resulting in an almost invisible flame on both hands.

The individual managed to extinguish the flames but was left with first- and second-degree burns.

Preventive actions and recommendations

- a. When using the alcohol-based hand gel sanitisers, ensure the gel is given suitable time to fully dry/evaporate.
- b. Avoid touching any surface until the gel has fully dried. Any form of ignition source has the potential to cause the same issues as experienced by the individual.
- c. If unsure about using the alcohol-based sanitisers, washing hands with hot soapy water has the same effect as the hand gel.

What went wrong?

Hand sanitiser gels contain concentrations of alcohol. Once the hand sanitiser is applied, individuals must make sure the gel has suitable time to dry. In the interest of safety, remember that alcohol vapours can ignite if exposed to an ignition source, such as light switches or cigarette lighters.