

HAND WASH BASINS & WATER PATHOGENS- DENTAL

Single Point Lesson

The management of water in healthcare is an essential part of ensuring that healthcare activities do not pose a risk or potential risk of infection and are securely managed. The **HTM 04 01** guidance provides a framework for best practice of water management in order to help healthcare organisations to meet the **Legislative requirements**. Hand wash basins are included in this management. As well as controlling Legionella there are other water pathogens such as Pseudomonas which can pose an infection control risk.

- Only use the hand wash basins for hand washing
- Do not dispose of fluids which may contain bodily fluid in the hand wash basin
- Do not decontaminate any re-useable equipment in the hand wash basin
- Do not use basins for storing used equipment awaiting decontamination
- Flush taps regularly and keep a record of when they were flushed
- Report any problems identified
- Do not locate alcohol gel dispensers on hand wash basins
- Use pre-filled single-use bottles for alcohol-based hand rubs or cleaning solutions
- Ensure all staff are properly trained



- Bacteria produce a biofilm on pipework, which provides protection for the harmful bacteria and allows them to multiply. This slime also makes it more difficult to remove them. Regular flushing of the water system will prevent stagnation and the development of biofilm.
- All healthcare premises should have a legionella risk assessment in place.
- Risk assessments should be carried out regularly and water systems reviewed every two years by an expert water treatment company.
- To minimise the risk of Pseudomonas growth it is critical to ensure there is no stagnation of the cold water system and that cold water tanks are maintained, cleaned and disinfected as necessary.



Sinks in healthcare the requirements:

- Taps should NOT be aligned to run directly into the drain aperture.
- Taps should be elbow or wrist operated.
- There should be no plug to allow hand washing to take place under running water.
- Overflows to hand wash basins are not recommended, as they constitute a constant infection control risk much more significant than the possible risk of damage due to water overflowing.
- The water temperature at point of delivery should be controlled either by manual control (separate hot and cold water taps or blending valves controlled manually by the user.)

Further guidance : Department of Health; Heath Building Note 00-10 Part C; Sanitary Assemblies:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-flooring-walls-and-ceilings-and-sanitary-assemblies-in-healthcare-facilities>

Please contact Karen Jones or the infection control team on 01744 457314/01744 457312 if you require any additional advice/support.