



Measuring hand hygiene compliance: Best practices for **direct observation**



Train observers

Train observers on the World Health Organization's (WHO) *5 Moments for Hand Hygiene* poster and WHO's Hand Hygiene Training Films, as well as the slides that accompany the training films. Also have observers practice conducting observations while a lead observer or infection prevention manager gives them feedback.

Assess inter-rate reliability

Assess inter-rate reliability (the degree to which observers agree) routinely to ensure consistency of data collection. In its simplest form, observers can conduct direct observations together and compare results. A lead observer could also accompany observers to reinforce consistent results.

Conduct direct observations

Conduct direct observations using the WHO's Data Collection Tool or a modified version, like John Hopkins' Medicine Monitoring Tool.

If observing manually, remember the following:

- Complete the top part of the header before commencing observation (except end time and duration)
- A session should last no more than 20 minutes.
- Record HHOs in the appropriate column and fill in the square corresponding to the indications for hand hygiene detected.
- Record hand hygiene events or HHEs (or hand hygiene actions) observed or missed for each indication.
- Record glove use only when a hand hygiene event is missed while the healthcare worker is wearing gloves.
- At the end of the session, record end time and duration

Compile the data

Compile data from each observation form onto a master database. To determine the compliance rate for specific periods of time, aggregate the total number of hand hygiene events for a given period and divide the value by the total number of HHOs within that same period.

Graph performance

Create performance graphs and appropriate reports to share within your unit and among your organization's leadership.

Give feedback

Give frontline staff feedback. Frontline workers should be provided with performance feedback as immediate as possible after reports have been created.

Develop action plans

Create action plans for improving performance. Each unit and department should be responsible and accountable for action plans to remove unit- or department-specific barriers and obstacles to proper hand hygiene behavior.