

Hand Hygiene Observations FAQ

1. Why are healthcare workers being observed?

There is a Ministry of Health directive that all health authorities in British Columbia observe hand hygiene. This is part of our commitment to patient safety. Interior Health has been conducting observations in acute care facilities since 2011 and in residential facilities since 2014.

2. Who is being observed?

All healthcare workers that provide direct patient care during routine care and/or enter a patient's environment. Urgent/emergent situations are excluded and not counted as observations.

3. How are observations performed?

They are performed by trained observers that record observations done during routine care. This is done in a way that will not disturb care activities and respects patient privacy.

Health Care Provider Categories

1. Nurse	2. Physician	3. Clinical Support Staff	4. Other
Care Aide	Fellow	Audiologist	Clerk
LPN	Medical Doctor	Dietician	Food Services
Midwife	Medical Student	Lab	Housekeeping
RN	Resident	Occupational Therapist	Maintenance
RPN		Pastoral Care	Security
Student		Physiotherapist	Volunteer
		Porter	
		Psychologist	
		Radiology	
		Respiratory Therapist	
		Social Worker	
		Speech Therapist	
		Technician	

4. Who is doing the observations?

Observations are performed by multiple members of the [IPAC Team](#).

5. What are the observers looking for?

Observers look for hand hygiene opportunities before and after contact with a patient and/or patient environment. These opportunities are then recorded as either done or not done.

6. Do observers enter the patient environment?

The observers will not disturb care activities and will respect patient privacy.

7. What happens if I perform hand hygiene behind a curtain or closed door?

If a curtain or door is closed then opportunities are not observed or included in the audit. If you cannot be seen, you cannot be observed. (Remember: Privacy curtains are part of the patient environment.)

8. When are observations performed?

Every quarter observations are performed randomly in specific areas.

9. How can I learn more about audits?

Review the hand hygiene external webpage, which has multiple documents and resources regarding hand hygiene.

10. When should healthcare workers be performing hand hygiene?

Healthcare workers should perform hand hygiene by following [Your 4 Moments for Hand Hygiene](#).