

WASH inclusive COVID-19 preparedness and response actions: experiences in the pan-European region

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and Sanitation, 13-14 June 2022

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WHO European Centre for Environmental Health

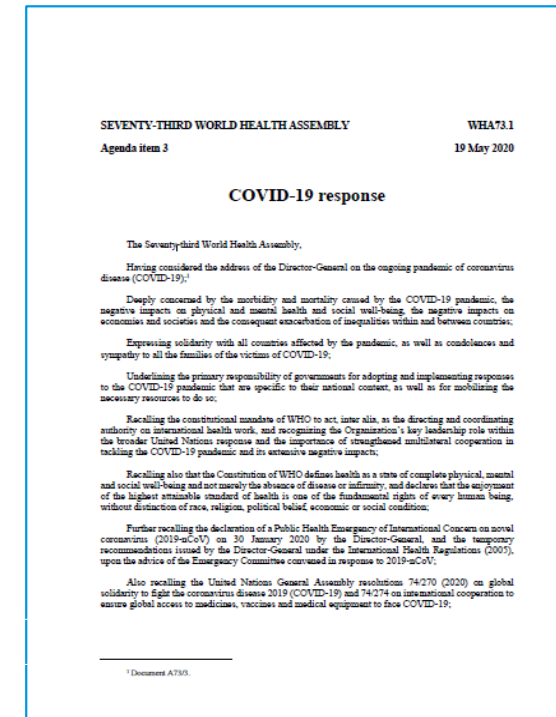


European Region



WASH – essential pillar for infection prevention and control

- COVID-19 pandemic is more than a **health crisis**; it is a **socio-economic crisis**, a **humanitarian crisis**, a **security crisis**, and a **human rights crisis**.
- Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services – a first line of defence in preventing and controlling the spread of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases.
- WHA resolution on COVID -19 response... take measures to support access to **safe WASH** and IPC, ... promotion of personal **hygienic measures in all settings**, including **humanitarian settings**, and particularly in **health facilities**.



Recommended actions on WASH to prevent spread of COVID-19

World Health Organization **unicef**

Water, sanitation, hygiene, and waste management for the COVID-19 virus

Interim guidance
23 April 2020

Background

This interim guidance provides the following information on COVID-19 to assist countries in maintaining public health and preventing the spread of the virus. It is intended for use by countries with limited resources and is not intended to replace national or local public health guidance. It is based on the best available evidence as of 23 April 2020.

The presence of all three conditions and regular maintenance of water supply and sanitation systems are essential for preventing the spread of COVID-19. This interim guidance provides information on the role of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) in preventing the spread of COVID-19. It is intended for use by countries with limited resources and is not intended to replace national or local public health guidance. It is based on the best available evidence as of 23 April 2020.

Key messages

1. Providing WASH services to the safe management of faeces and wastewater is essential for preventing the spread of COVID-19. This interim guidance provides information on the role of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) in preventing the spread of COVID-19. It is intended for use by countries with limited resources and is not intended to replace national or local public health guidance. It is based on the best available evidence as of 23 April 2020.
2. Hand hygiene is essential for preventing the spread of COVID-19. This interim guidance provides information on the role of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) in preventing the spread of COVID-19. It is intended for use by countries with limited resources and is not intended to replace national or local public health guidance. It is based on the best available evidence as of 23 April 2020.
3. Access to clean water and sanitation is essential for preventing the spread of COVID-19. This interim guidance provides information on the role of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) in preventing the spread of COVID-19. It is intended for use by countries with limited resources and is not intended to replace national or local public health guidance. It is based on the best available evidence as of 23 April 2020.
4. WASH services should be provided to all people, including those in informal settlements and slums. This interim guidance provides information on the role of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) in preventing the spread of COVID-19. It is intended for use by countries with limited resources and is not intended to replace national or local public health guidance. It is based on the best available evidence as of 23 April 2020.
5. WASH services should be provided to all people, including those in informal settlements and slums. This interim guidance provides information on the role of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) in preventing the spread of COVID-19. It is intended for use by countries with limited resources and is not intended to replace national or local public health guidance. It is based on the best available evidence as of 23 April 2020.

Cleaning and disinfection of environmental surfaces in the context of COVID-19

Interim guidance
19 May 2020

Background

Environmental surfaces (ES) are any surfaces or objects that are touched or contacted by people. ES can be contaminated with COVID-19 virus, which can then be transferred to another person. This interim guidance provides information on the role of cleaning and disinfection of ES in preventing the spread of COVID-19. It is intended for use by countries with limited resources and is not intended to replace national or local public health guidance. It is based on the best available evidence as of 19 May 2020.

Key messages

1. Cleaning and disinfection of ES is essential for preventing the spread of COVID-19. This interim guidance provides information on the role of cleaning and disinfection of ES in preventing the spread of COVID-19. It is intended for use by countries with limited resources and is not intended to replace national or local public health guidance. It is based on the best available evidence as of 19 May 2020.
2. Cleaning and disinfection of ES should be done regularly. This interim guidance provides information on the role of cleaning and disinfection of ES in preventing the spread of COVID-19. It is intended for use by countries with limited resources and is not intended to replace national or local public health guidance. It is based on the best available evidence as of 19 May 2020.
3. Cleaning and disinfection of ES should be done using appropriate products and methods. This interim guidance provides information on the role of cleaning and disinfection of ES in preventing the spread of COVID-19. It is intended for use by countries with limited resources and is not intended to replace national or local public health guidance. It is based on the best available evidence as of 19 May 2020.
4. Cleaning and disinfection of ES should be done in a safe and effective manner. This interim guidance provides information on the role of cleaning and disinfection of ES in preventing the spread of COVID-19. It is intended for use by countries with limited resources and is not intended to replace national or local public health guidance. It is based on the best available evidence as of 19 May 2020.
5. Cleaning and disinfection of ES should be done in a safe and effective manner. This interim guidance provides information on the role of cleaning and disinfection of ES in preventing the spread of COVID-19. It is intended for use by countries with limited resources and is not intended to replace national or local public health guidance. It is based on the best available evidence as of 19 May 2020.

World Health Organization **unicef**
for every child

JOINT STATEMENT

"To control COVID-19, we have to make hand hygiene accessible to all" – UNICEF and WHO

Joint statement by **Henrietta Fore, Executive Director of UNICEF**, and **Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization**, on the launch of the "Hand Hygiene for All" joint initiative

New York/Geneva, 26 June 2020 – "As the world struggles to cope with a new disease, one of the most effective tools to prevent its spread is also one of the most basic. Hand hygiene has never been more critical, not only to combat COVID-19, but to prevent a range of other infections. Yet, nearly six months since the onset of the pandemic, the most vulnerable communities around the world continue to lack access to basic hand hygiene.

"According to our latest data, the majority of people in the least developed countries are at immediate risk of COVID-19 infection due to a lack of hand hygiene facilities. In the 60 highest-risk countries, 2 out of 3 people – 1 billion people in total – lack basic handwashing facilities with soap and water at home. Around half are children.

"All too often, schools, clinics, hospitals and other public spaces also lack hand hygiene facilities, putting children, teachers, patients and health workers at risk. Globally, 2 in 5 health care facilities do not have hand hygiene at points of care.

"We cannot overstate the threat.

"Many of the those who lack access to basic handwashing live in overcrowded, desperately poor conditions. Even before the pandemic, children and families faced barriers to accessing health and hygiene services. Now the grave risk of COVID-19 threatens further suffering and spread of this deadly disease.

"If we are going to control COVID-19, we have to make hand hygiene accessible to all. That is why we are launching a new global initiative to move the world towards the same goal: supporting the most vulnerable communities with the means to protect their health and environment.

"We are joining our efforts with those of other international partners, national governments, public and private sectors, and civil society organizations to ensure affordable products and services are available, especially in disadvantaged areas, and to enable a culture of hygiene.

"Public health response plans and reopening plans should couple physical distancing and other control measures with hand hygiene and access to safe water and sanitation, and must reach the most vulnerable communities.

"Our teams are developing comprehensive country roadmaps and committing human and financial resources to support global and local implementation efforts. Task teams will facilitate learning and knowledge exchange, while multisector stakeholders will strengthen hygiene programming and monitor global progress. Leaders and community mobilizers will advise on

Recommendations to Member States to improve hand hygiene practices to help prevent the transmission of the COVID-19 virus

Interim guidance
1 April 2020

World Health Organization

Recommendations

Member States to improve hand hygiene practices widely to help prevent the transmission of the COVID-19 virus by:

1. Providing universal access to public hand hygiene stations and ensuring that use is obligatory on entrance and leaving any public or private commercial building and public transport facility.
2. Improving access to hand hygiene facilities and practices in health care facilities.

Background

Current evidence indicates that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted through respiratory droplets or contact. Contact transmission occurs when contaminated hands touch the mucous of the mouth, nose, or eyes; the virus can also be transferred from one surface to another by contaminated hands, which facilitates indirect contact transmission. Consequently, hand hygiene is extremely important to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. It also interrupts transmission of other viruses and bacteria causing common colds, flu and pneumonia, and reduces the spread of other diseases. Although prevention of the transmission of hand hygiene is preventing infection with the COVID-19 virus, high access to hand hygiene facilities that include alcohol-based hand rubs as well as soap and water is often suboptimal in the community and in health care facility settings, especially in low and middle-income countries. WHO and UNICEF estimate that globally 3 billion people lack hand hygiene facilities at home and two out of five health care facilities lack hand hygiene at points of care.¹ Further, access has become increasingly challenging as a result of stock-outs of supplies. When hand hygiene is provided, use of detergents and soap is essential for public health reduction, acceptability and adherence to hand hygiene best practices are improved, including in public health emergencies of international concern.² Hand hygiene is the most effective single measure to reduce the spread of infection through multimodal strategies, including access to the appropriate supplies.³ Therefore, this guidance is relevant for all countries.

WHO recommendations:

1. One or several hand hygiene stations (either for handwashing with soap and water⁴ or for hand rubbing with an alcohol-based hand rub)⁵ should be placed in those of the entrance of every public (including schools and healthcare facilities) or private commercial building to allow everyone to practice hand hygiene before entering and when leaving the facility.
2. Facilities should be provided at all transport locations, and especially at major bus and train stations, airports, and seaports.
3. The quantity and usability of the hand hygiene stations should be adapted to the type (e.g. young children, elderly, those with limited mobility) and number of users to better encourage use and reduce waiting time.
4. The acquisition, operation, and regular refilling of the equipment should be the overall responsibility of building managers. Private sector and civil society initiatives to support the acquisition, maintenance, and effective use are welcome.
5. The use of public hand hygiene stations should be obligatory before passing the threshold of the entrance to any building and to any means of public transport during the COVID-19 pandemic. Reported hand hygiene behaviour outside private houses can also help increase part of the routine hygiene life in all countries.
6. All private and public health care facilities should establish or strengthen their hand hygiene.

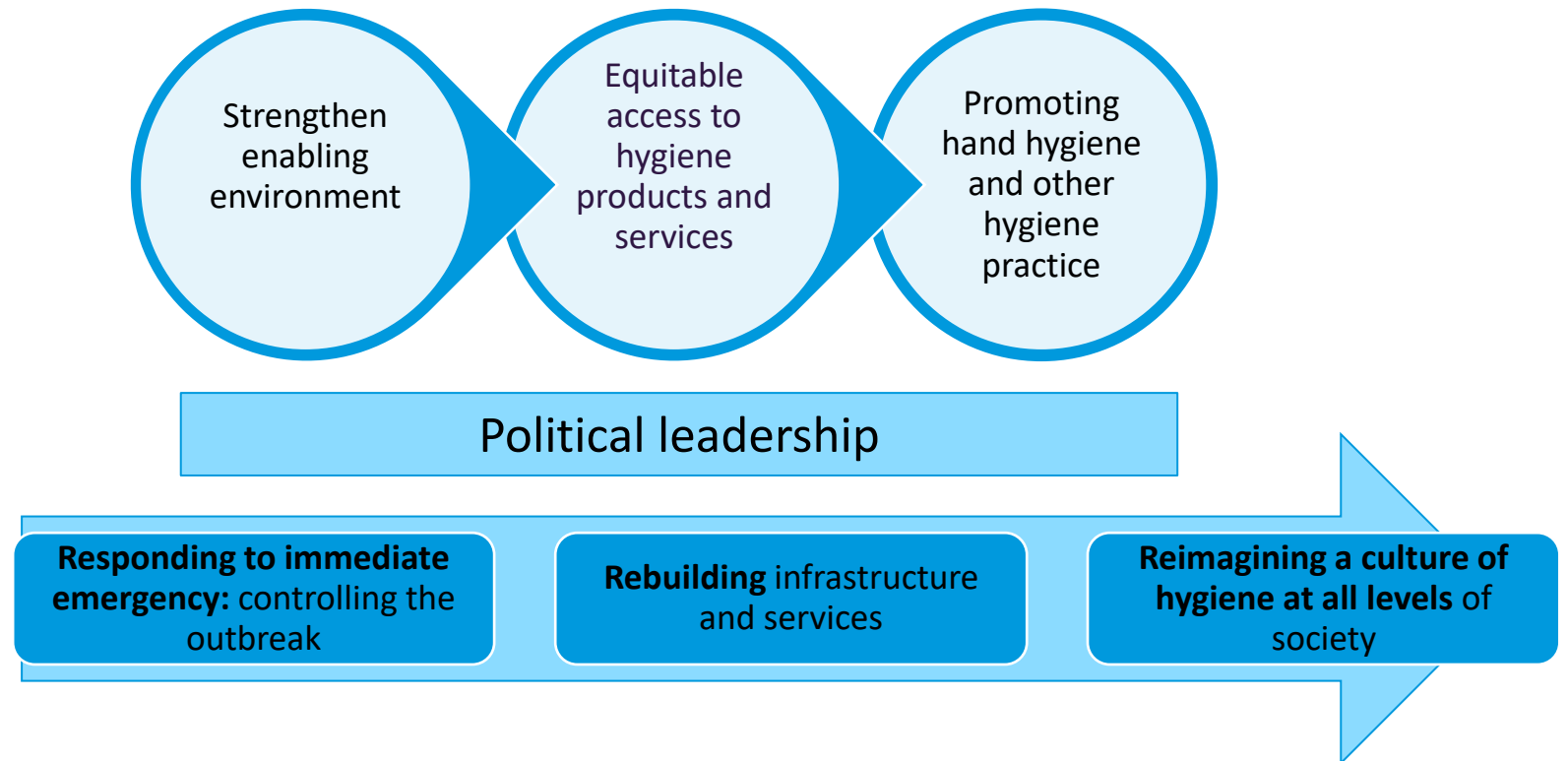
¹ Where ASH is not being used, a liquid soap solution, instead of detergent with water, can be used. The ratio of detergent to water will depend on types and strength of locally available products.

² Chlorine hand washing solutions are not recommended because of potential harm to users and those making the solution, as well as degradation of clothes exposed to multiple or lower 'soaps' quantities (bars and spray bars, and liquid soap solutions can also be used).



Making hand hygiene accessible to all

- Develop **national roadmaps** to ensure universal HH
- Provide **universal access to public HH stations**
- Make **HH obligatory in buildings and public transport facilities**
- Provide access to HH facilities and practices in **health care facilities**



To what extent national plans for COVID-19 preparedness and response address WASH?

- UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-water (GLAAS), implemented by WHO
- Monitoring progress towards universal, sustainable WASH systems and services to all, especially unserved and disadvantaged groups as part of the SDGs
- Provides a useful situation analysis of the WASH sector
- GLAAS 2021-2022 country survey:
 - More comprehensive questions on hand hygiene
 - New question on **WASH in COVID-19 preparedness and response plans**
- Data analysed for 19 participating countries in the pan-European region



WASH IN COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLANS				
A6. COVID-19 preparedness and response plans: Has a COVID-19 preparedness and response plan been developed by the government, and to what extent does it address WASH?				
	Yes	No	<i>If yes, please provide the name of the plan. If available, provide a link to the plan or attach a copy.</i>	
a. Has the government developed a COVID-19 preparedness and response plan?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Government of Georgia Decree No 164 28 January 2020 On the Approval of Measures to Prevent the Possible Spread of the Novel Coronavirus in Georgia and the Emergency Response	
	Yes	No	<i>If yes, please describe how the topic is addressed.</i>	
<i>If yes:</i> Does the COVID-19 preparedness and response plan address the following:				
i. Hand hygiene behaviour change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/download/4821121/14/en/pdf	
ii. Hand hygiene facilities in health care facilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	WASH Management for SARS-Cov-2 the virus that causes COVID-19 approved in 22.03.2021 by order from minister of Health Infection	
iii. Hand hygiene facilities in public places (i.e. markets, transportation hubs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	WASH Management for SARS-Cov-2 the virus that causes COVID-19 approved in 22.03.2021 by order from minister of Health Infection	
iv. Drinking-water	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	WASH Management for SARS-Cov-2 the virus that causes COVID-19 approved in 22.03.2021 by order from minister of Health Infection	
v. Sanitation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	WASH Management for SARS-Cov-2 the virus that causes COVID-19 approved in 22.03.2021 by order from minister of Health Infection	
vi. WASH in health care facilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	WASH Management for SARS-Cov-2 the virus that causes COVID-19 approved in 22.03.2021 by order from minister of Health Infection	
vii. Health care waste management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	WASH Management for SARS-Cov-2 the virus that causes COVID-19 approved in 22.03.2021 by order from minister of Health Infection	
viii. WASH for vulnerable populations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	WASH Management for SARS-Cov-2 the virus that causes COVID-19 approved in 22.03.2021 by order from minister of Health Infection	
			<i>If yes, please provide the cost estimate.</i>	
ix. If the plan addresses WASH, have the WASH components of the plan been costed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Cost estimate	
			Currency	
			Time period of cost estimate	
x. If the plan addresses WASH, have the WASH components been	Less than 50% of what is needed	Between 50 and 74% of what is needed	Between 75 and 94% of what is needed	Between 95 and 100% of what is needed

• Source: GLAAS 2021-2022 country survey questionnaire

Country actions: prioritising hand hygiene

Creating an enabling environment and scaling-up hand hygiene in different settings

- **Establish regulatory requirements** for hand hygiene
- **Guidelines and SOPs** or guidance for different settings
- **Enforce** the requirements in practice:
 - Homes
 - Public settings (markets, transport hubs etc)
 - Health care facilities
 - Educational facilities
 - Long-term care facilities
- **Procurement** of supplies to ensure continued availability of HH products
- **Local production of alcohol-based hand sanitizer**
- Provision of **handwashing stations** and dispensers with disinfectants
- **Monitoring compliance** with standard precautions, including HH
- Promotion and HH **behaviour change** activities

**Revitalising a culture
of hand hygiene**

Country actions: water and sanitation

Ensuring safe operation of water supply and sanitation services

Examples of measures and approaches

- Recommendations for enhanced hygiene and sanitation in settings for **vulnerable groups**
- Sustain **safe operation** and **protect workers health**
- **Specific guidance** and additional **measures** to ensure continued supply of drinking water and sanitation services
- Recommendations for building water supply systems during **temporary closure**
- **Assessment** and **control of risks** by implementing water safety plans
- **Local preparedness** and **response plans**: measures to ensure continued water and sanitation service
- Improve IPC, WASH and waste management in **health care facilities**
- **Monitoring** of WASH in schools and health care facilities
- **Environmental surveillance** of SAR-COV-2 in wastewater
- **Social measures**: prohibit suspension of **communal services** if service fee is not paid or payment delayed
- Allocation of **additional funds** for disinfectants, PPE and environmental cleaning

Implications on WASH services

- **Vulnerable groups** who are most at risk of infections are not always targeted
- **Operational and financial challenges** of water supply and sanitation systems due to high service demand (ie. increased hospital admissions)
- Increased water consumption, combined with deficient recharge of aquifers, resulting in **restrictions of water supply**
- Temporary closure of buildings may lead to **water quality** incidents and **health risks** (i.e. Legionella, hazardous chemicals leaching from pipes). Need to establishing the procedures for **safe recommissioning** of buildings
- **Supply chain disruptions** and shortage of water treatment chemicals, disinfectants and other essential supplies
- **Interruption of WASH services** due to reduced **manpower**
- WASH plans are not sufficiently backed up by **funding** and investment



- Prioritise evidence informed interventions for equitable WASH services, inclusive of vulnerable groups
- Reflect on lessons learned from the pandemic for healthy recovery and strengthen the preparedness and resilience of WASH systems and services to future crisis and emergencies



Thank you

For more information, please contact: enkhtsetsegs@who.int



World Health Organization

European Region