

# Safety Alert



**SUBJECT:** Alcohol-based Hand Sanitiser

**RECIPIENTS:** All Council Services

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## Beware when using alcohol-based sanitiser

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, and the recommendations to frequently wash/clean your hands, an employee had used an alcohol-based hand sanitiser to clean their hands.



Before the sanitiser had evaporated, i.e. whilst the employee's hands were still effectively wet, they made contact with a metal surface. On touching the metal surface, due to a build-up of static electricity, the vapour from the hand sanitiser was ignited by a spark, with an almost invisible flame on both hands. The employee quickly managed to get to a sink to extinguish the flames. The resulting injury was first- and second-degree burns to both hands (see photo).

Due to the high alcohol content of most hand sanitisers, they are classed as 'Class 1 Flammable Liquids' and should be kept away from sparks, naked/open flames, any types of electrical outlets, switches or equipment, and extreme heat.

### Advice

If you do not have access to soap and water, and are instead using alcohol-based hand sanitisers, do ensure that all liquid has evaporated fully and that hands are completely dry before touching any surface. Remember also, when using a hand sanitiser, to ensure you clean the same parts of the hand that you would do if you were washing your hands with soap and water (see guidance below).



Palm to palm



The backs of hands



In between the fingers



The back of the fingers



The thumbs



The tips of the fingers