

Clarification on Alcohol-Based Hand Rubs (ABHR)

The Joint Commission's official stand on the use of alcohol-based hand rubs (ABHR) is described here. Use of ABHR is for topical bacteria only, not for gross soiling. Use of ABHR is not meant to replace hand cleansing.

ABHR Gel Product: Dispensers in Egress Corridors

The Joint Commission allows the installation of gel product dispensers in egress corridors, provided that the following conditions are met:

- The corridor width is 6 feet or greater, and dispensers are at least 4 feet apart.
- The dispensers are not installed over or directly adjacent to electrical outlets and switches. *Adjacent* is defined as being no closer than 12 inches from the center of the dispenser to either side.
- In locations with carpeted floor coverings, dispensers installed directly over carpeted

surfaces are permitted only in sprinklered smoke compartments.

ABHR Gel Product: Permissible Volume

- Each smoke compartment may contain a maximum aggregate of 10 gallons of ABHR gel product in dispensers and a maximum of 5 gallons in storage.
- The maximum individual dispenser fluid capacity is 1.2 liters for dispensers in rooms, corridors, and areas open to corridors.
- The maximum individual dispenser fluid capacity is 2.0 liters for dispensers in suites of rooms.

ABHR Foam Product: Permissible Location

Note that the preceding criteria do *not* include ABHR foam product in the corridors, which is not to be dispensed in egress corridors. ABHR foam product may

be used inside patient rooms and suites, provided that the dispensers are installed safely, as per the following:

- The dispensers are not installed over or directly adjacent to electrical outlets and switches. *Adjacent* is defined as being no closer than 12 inches from the center of the dispenser to either side.
- In locations with carpeted floor coverings, dispensers installed directly over carpeted surfaces are permitted only in sprinklered smoke compartments.

ABHR Foam Product: Permissible Volume

No studies have been conducted by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) or other related agencies to provide quantity guidance, so the Joint Commission would expect volumes to be the same as or less than those for ABHR gel product. **EC**