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## Monthly Safety Blast

*Produced by the Southwest Center for Agricultural Health, Injury Prevention and Education*

**November 2016**

## Hygiene Practices for Farm Workers

According to the US Department of Agriculture, good hygiene among farm workers is critical in assuring a safe workplace and a safe product. Hands can introduce physical adulterants or contaminate food with pathogens which can cause gastrointestinal or respiratory disease.

### **Farm Worker Hand Washing Policies**

Instruct workers how to properly wash their hands prior to handling produce, or after an activity in which hands can potentially become contaminated. Some activities may include: after using the bathroom, when hands are visibly dirty and/or when working with animal manure. Expectations for proper hand washing should be clearly made at employee orientation and/or meetings, in employee manuals, and through signage.

### **Hand Washing Basics**

All workers should be trained and understand proper hand washing techniques. Landowners and managers should explain the following steps:

- Wet hands. Cold water is fine.
- Apply a liquid or powdered soap (this should be unscented but does not need to be antimicrobial)
- Scrub hands including between fingers, backs of hands, wrists and under nails (this part should take 15-20 seconds).
- Rinse hands until no soap remains.
- Dry hands with a single-use paper towel. Single-use towel is important so that employees don't wipe their hands on their clothing as a method of drying and inadvertently contaminate their hands.





### Resources:

- [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)
- [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)
- [www.handwashingforlife.com](http://www.handwashingforlife.com)

**Disclaimer:** The facts and information listed above are merely suggestions for your safety, but are in no way a comprehensive and exhausted list of all actions needed to insure your safety.

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