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# Ideal Locations for Hand Sanitizer Dispensers

*People aren't always around soap and water to wash hands; they need access to hand sanitizer*

By Cynthia Kincaid  
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[The Mayo Clinic](#) and the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) first recommended using soap and water to effectively clean hands, but building occupants aren't always around a water source. The need for hand sanitizer is certainly apparent as the use of hand sanitizer has never been greater.

In fact, a 2010 report from [Global Industry Analysts Inc.](#), a San Jose, Calif.-based market research firm, states the hand sanitizer industry is likely to exceed \$402 million in business by 2015. The report shows a rising demand for hand sanitizers in hospitals, alternate care settings, restaurant chains, food processing plants, schools, and with the military.

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[Panjiva](#), a New York-based data tracking and analytics firm, confirms this trend, finding that shipments of hand sanitizer increased 10 percent from July through September 2009, which is up from 6 million pounds of sanitizer. One notable manufacturer of hand sanitizer also reported a 24 percent increase in sales.

With sales expected to remain strong, jan/san distributors need to know the ideal placement for hand sanitizer dispensers.

## Location, Location, Location

To be sure, the availability of hand sanitizer should be predicated on ease of use, such as putting dispensers where they will be recognized and used.

"Using soap and water is the most desirable aspect for hand washing, but we are not always around soap and water, and that's why it's important to have hand sanitizer as a supplement," says Brian Sansoni, vice president of communications for the [American Cleaning Institute](#), Washington D.C.

The decision for the placement of hand sanitizer dispensers should also take into account the location of the dispenser to be washed off of hands.

"The CDC says that you use hand sanitizer when you don't have any visible dirt on your hands," says Reatrix Babcock, a partner for HCI Consulting Group LLC in Denver.



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Deanna Babcock, a partner for HFC Consulting Group LLC in Denver.

However, it can be challenging to find a location that maximizes occupant visibility while meeting building safety codes.

"Hand sanitizers are alcohol-based and the [National Fire Protection Association 101] prohibits some places you can put them," says Babcock. "You can't put them near electrical outlets. Most hospitals have taken them out of the hallways, especially in government hospitals because of the high amount of alcohol in them."

So where are some of the best places to position sanitizer dispensers?

"It's wise to have it in places where there is high traffic depending on what kind of public building it is," says Sansoni. "Places where there are lots of meetings going on, office buildings, conference rooms, auditoriums, are great places to have hand sanitizer dispensers. Having them in a place with a lot of foot traffic is a great way to keep the hands clean."

Hand sanitizer is also showing up more frequently in hospitals, schools, hotels, shopping centers, and even grocery stores.

Many hospitals are now placing dispensers next to check-in desks, medication carts, nursing stations, and outside patient rooms, and inside patient rooms next to soap dispensers.

Grocery stores, in particular, have been forward thinking when it comes to hand sanitizer for their customers. Retailers place them next to carts right as customers walk in, says Fleishman. "It's a great pair with wet wipes to clean off cart handles," he adds.

"Those dispensers certainly send a message that the retailer cares about its shoppers, customers, and employees, as well," says Sansoni. "Hopefully the stores have enough sanitizer in back offices, restrooms, and handling areas. Having these sanitizer dispensers available in grocery stores not only sends a positive message to shoppers, it's an extra tool to enhance public health."

In any facility, people may not properly wash their hands after using a restroom, so having a dispenser placed inside the restroom or just outside a restroom door may be a useful reminder, says Sansoni.

People exiting the restroom may also want to use hand sanitizer after touching the restroom door, says Sansoni. Even though users just washed their hands, touching the restroom door upon exiting could re-contaminate hands.

*Cynthia Kincaid is a freelance writer based in Gahanna, Ohio.*



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