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## Commentary

**Title:** Alcohol-Based Hand Sanitizers

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Over the past two years, the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers within health care facilities has greatly increased. These products are regarded as an important aspect to improving hand hygiene practices of health care personnel and in reducing health care-associated infections with patients. Containers of hand sanitizer are typically located on wall-mounted holders from which a small amount can be dispensed prior to it being applied to hands. Since these products are dispensed and used in very small quantities, the fire hazards they present are minimal. However, alcohol is a flammable liquid and the use and storage of these products is regulated under provincial fire safety regulations. The following is a list of recommendations to address potential fire safety hazards related to the use and storage of alcohol-based hand sanitizers within health care facilities.

1. Avoid exposure to open flames during and immediately after application. A warning should be provided to potential users of the product e.g. signage or instruction to staff.
2. This product should not be dispensed, stored or handled near any sources of ignition. Sources of ignition include, but are not limited to, open flames, smoking, cutting and welding, hot surfaces, frictional heat, static, electrical and mechanical sparks, spontaneous ignition, heat producing chemical reactions, radiant heat.
3. Alcohol-based products may have hazardous reactions with strong oxidizers or inorganic acids. This product should not be dispensed, stored or handled near any oxygen sources, oxidizers or inorganic acids.
4. Dispensers containing this product should not be located in a required means of egress or exit system. Local authorities may provide guidance on acceptable installation of dispensers.
5. The storage of product not for immediate use should be located in an acceptable storage room or cabinet in accordance with provincial fire safety regulations or local bylaw.