

New compliance standard for hand sanitisers - SABS

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Almost a year after South Africa recorded its first Covid-19 case, the use of hand sanitisers has become commonplace, including at workplaces. The South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) has issued a new standard (amended SANS 490) for hand sanitisers. We summarise the key information from the new standard for employers below.



Photo by Anna Shvets from [Pexels](#)

New minimum alcohol content thresholds

Hand sanitisers with no "active" ingredients must have a minimum 70% alcohol content. Hand sanitisers with "active" ingredients must have a minimum of 60% alcohol content. "Active" ingredients are biologically active ingredients such as benzalkonium chloride.

Prohibited ingredients

The following hand sanitiser ingredients have been cited as having extraneous toxicity levels, posing a danger to users when absorbed through the skin:

- Acetone
- Methanol
- Methylated sprits

*These are now considered to be **prohibited ingredients** and hand sanitisers may no longer contain them.*



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Packaging and labelling requirements

SANS 490 requires hand sanitisers to be packaged and labelled according to set standards. The amended SANS 490 adds further requirements for packaging and labelling. Hand sanitiser packaging may not contain cork closure lids and the labelling of hand sanitiser products must contain the following minimum information:

- The registration number and full address of the manufacturer/producer
- Alcohol percentage
- "Flammable" warning
- "Do not ingest" warning
- "Store below certain temperature" warning
- Whether the sanitiser is a gel or liquid
- Volume or mass of the liquid or gel
- The ingredients, and specifically the type of alcohol
- Expiry date and batch number
- Instructions for use
- SABS-approved mark, if the manufacturer is a SABS-approved manufacturer or brand

The amended SANS 490 must be followed not only by hand sanitiser manufacturers but also employers who distribute hand sanitisers in the workplace. If hand sanitisers do not comply with the amended SANS 490, employers should not distribute them in the workplace.

By distributing hand sanitisers that comply with the amended SANS 490, employers will ensure that the health and safety of their employees and anyone else who may enter the workplace is sufficiently safeguarded.

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