

## HAND SANITIZER

The use of hand sanitizer has increased dramatically during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has increased the risk of incidents involving hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizer is extremely flammable because of the high alcohol content (60-90%); it has a low flash point making it easily ignitable and dangerous if not used and stored correctly. To prevent ignition of hand sanitizer, the following precautions should be taken:

- Wherever possible, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; for more information on handwashing, refer to BC's Center for Disease Control.
- Consider applying hand sanitizer in a well-ventilated area.
- After applying hand sanitizer, always allow your hands to dry and the alcohol vapours to dissipate before smoking, welding or doing any type of activity that exposes you to a flame or spark.
- Hand sanitizer should be stored in a cool ventilated area, away from direct heat sources and sunlight.
- Always store hand sanitizer in its sealed manufacturer's container; avoid transferring to non-approved or personal containers that may leak.

### Additional Precautions

- Use hand sanitizer that meets the requirements of Health Canada; only use approved products with a *Drug Identification Number* or *Natural Product Number*. Industrial grade ethanol may contain impurities or added chemicals that can irritate skin or cause dryness and cracking.
- Caution should be taken in storing hand sanitizer in your vehicle. Hand sanitizer has a low flashpoint; increased temperature increases the risk of ignition as the alcohol is released into a vapour.

*Note: Heat causes the alcohol to evaporate quicker, reducing the alcohol content and the overall effectiveness of the hand sanitizer.*

