

Infection Control and Cleaning Guidelines

For the Alco-Sensor® Product Line

Infection Control

Intoximeters is occasionally asked about whether or not it is possible for an infectious disease carrying subject to pass along the infection to an Operator or a subsequent subject that uses the Alco-Sensor breath testing instrument.

Intoximeters is not an expert on the transmission of infectious diseases and we urge our customers to seek direction from medical experts for questions related to the transmission of any disease. There are, however, several common sense practices to consider with regard to reducing the likelihood of disease transmission when using a breath alcohol detection device.

During Operation

Staying out of the direct line of the subject's breath flow is obviously a good practice to avoid airborne transmission of disease. Certain instruments are designed to maximize your ability to comfortably position yourself such that you avoid being in the subject's breath flow path while collecting a sample for analysis.

An operator's use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE; gloves, masks or respirators) are additional safeguards which can be considered to further reduce the likelihood of disease transmission while performing a sample collection.

For instruments where you are touching parts of the device or mouthpieces that the subject has touched or blown on, we agree with the CDC's belief that your first line of defense is to wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use an alcohol based cleaner.

If you use an alcohol based hand sanitizer and you are operating a hand held breath analyzer, wait 10 minutes after your hands have dried to perform a breath test. After 10 minutes, residual alcohol from the hand cleaner should have evaporated into the ambient environment, eliminating the possibility of it contaminating a subsequent breath sample.

Disinfecting an Instrument

While Intoximeters does not wish to endorse any single product, we have found that there are a variety of products offered in single-sheet wipes that appear to be only slightly damp, and would therefore be less likely to allow the ingress of liquid into the unit or its sample system.

While many products claim to disinfect surfaces, these disinfecting products' effectiveness are not warranted by Intoximeters.

Given the variety of disinfecting products available and the numerous chemicals used in these products, it is important that any product used be tested first on a small part of the device's case to ensure that it does not discolor or otherwise damage the case before applying the solution to the entire instrument. Testing is important, as there are organic solvents that can damage both the fuel cell sensor in the instrument, the instrument case, display and other instrument parts.

As well, if the cleaning material is alcohol based, an adequate amount of time must be allowed after cleaning the instrument (for the alcohol or other active agent to dissipate) before further subject testing occurs. Waiting to test ten (10) minutes after the disinfectant has dried should be enough time for this to occur. Other procedures that can be used are to either perform a manual blank sample on the instrument or to perform an accuracy check. If the blank sample indicates that there is no alcohol or the accuracy check indicates that the instrument is reading accurately, you are assured that any alcohol or any other potentially interfering substance from the disinfectant has evaporated.

Other important precautions when cleaning an instrument:

1. Be certain not to get liquid into the sample system (fuel cell or pressure sensor) or onto the instrument's circuit board(s).
2. Do not immerse the instrument in a liquid. Use a moist, but not dripping, cloth to apply the cleaning solution to the exterior surface that you wish to clean.
3. Clean exterior surfaces where the subject or subject's breath or other expectorant has made contact with the instrument.
4. If cleaning internal surfaces of the instrument is required, a factory maintenance technician should be employed to provide this service. Under no circumstances should the user remove case covers or access internal components for cleaning. This may void your warranty.
5. Let the instrument dry completely and then observe a ten minute waiting period before testing resumes.