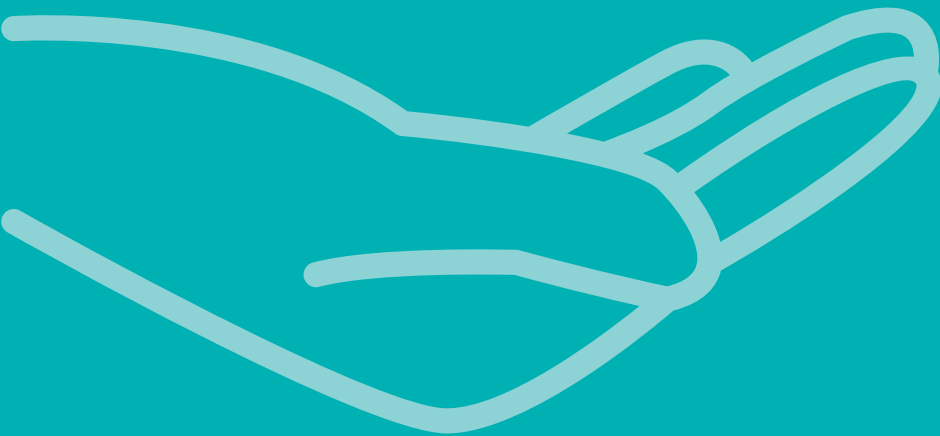


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# THE TRUTH ABOUT HAND WASHING AND DRYING AT WORK

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New independent research and  
advice from washroom provider, Elis



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# 1

## Summary

**New independent research conducted by YouGov on behalf of washroom provider, Elis, has found that the majority of employees do not wash or dry their hands properly at work, with drying equipment often blamed for the failure to dry hands fully.**

The importance of hand washing to help reduce the spread of bacteria and viruses is widely known. Less well known is that hand drying is also integral to effective hand hygiene, as hands which are inadequately dried are more likely to transmit microorganisms than those which are thoroughly dried.

The new research uncovers employees' hand washing and hand drying habits, which hand drying equipment they prefer and which they blame for failing to dry their hands fully. It is hoped that these findings, together with the simple advice from Elis contained in this report, will help employers provide better washroom facilities and improve hand hygiene in the workplace.

**“...the majority of employees  
do not wash or dry their hands  
properly at work...”**

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## How clean are employees' hands?



### Washing hands properly?

55% of employees say they wash their hands for less than the recommended 20 seconds when they are at work. 27% wash their hands for ten seconds or less.

Only 37% say they wash their hands for 20 seconds or more.

The over 55s (45%) are more likely to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds, compared to other age groups.

### Drying hands properly?

57% say they leave the workplace washroom with damp hands because the drying equipment is not good enough or fast enough, with those working in London (60%) and the under 35s (65%) the most likely to say this.

Only 31% of employees say they always leave their workplace washroom with dry hands, compared to 66% who say their hands are dry when they leave a bathroom at home.

**“We know that we should be washing our hands properly, but research has also shown that damp hands can spread more bacteria and viruses than dry hands, so it is important to dry hands properly too.**

**The fact that employees are twice as likely to leave the workplace washroom with damp hands, compared to their bathroom at home, and that a majority blame the drying equipment, means there is an opportunity for employers to improve hand hygiene by providing better equipment”**

Nick Barton, regional director of Elis

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## Hand drying equipment inadequate

### Paper towels

The research found that paper towels are the preferred way to dry hands for many employees (46%) and that they are also viewed as the most hygienic hand drying option (with 50% believing this).

However, there is still some dissatisfaction, with 19% of employees saying they sometimes leave the workplace washroom with damp hands because the paper towels are not easy or fast enough to use.

And employees are even more likely to say this if they:

- Work for a small company (10-49 employees) (25%)
- Are under 35 (26%)

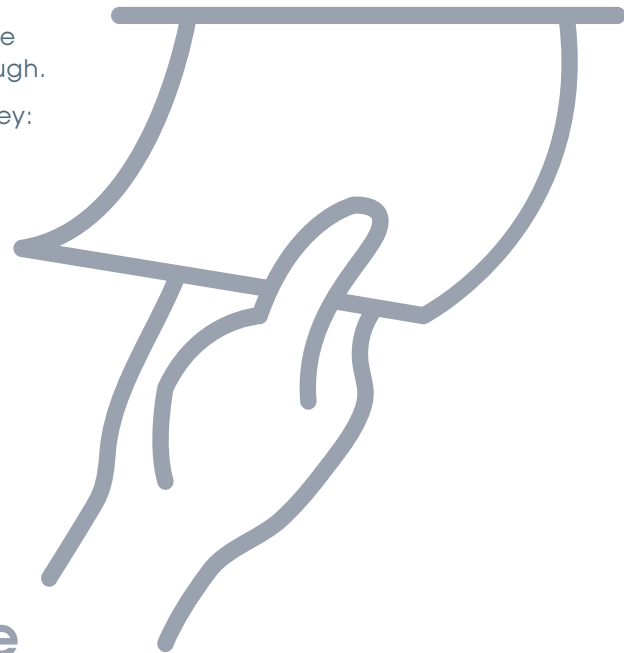
### Electric hand dryers

While electric dryers are the second most popular way to dry hands at work (scoring 39%) with 39% also believing them to be the most hygienic, many employees are dissatisfied with their dryers at work.

43% of employees say they sometimes leave the workplace washroom with damp hands because the electric hand dryer is not good enough or fast enough.

And employees are even more likely to say this if they:

- Work for companies with 250+ employees (49%)
- Work in London (50%)
- Are male (46%)



“...paper towels are the preferred way to dry hands for many employees...”

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## Top five ways to improve hand washing and drying facilities

### Here are Elis' top tips:

- 1 Make sure you always have sufficient soap (30% of employees are concerned there won't be sufficient soap) Consider upgrading to non-drip wall dispensers with easy refill pouches
- 2 Upgrade to no-touch soap dispensers and dryers (60% of employees said that no-touch equipment is important to them)
- 3 Make sure your paper towel dispensers are working well, or upgrade to those that do. (Dispensers that jam and result in piles of towels being taken out, waste money and can frustrate employees)
- 4 If you have slow hot air dryers, upgrade to fast drying jet air dryers with a hygienic HEPA air filter
- 5 Consider a modern cotton roller towel for better environmental credentials and cotton hand drying, like at home



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## How Elis Washroom Services can help

**Elis provides a cost effective, nationwide washroom service, with a wide range of products and regular, scheduled service visits to help businesses comply with legislation and deliver high levels of hygiene for employees and visitors.**

Elis offers its washroom service from a national network of service centres around the UK. Each site has a dedicated customer service team and communicates directly with customers to ensure that the service meets customer requirements. Having a customer service team based at the site providing the service, rather than a remote central call centre, ensures that communications are relayed quickly and in person.

The managed service includes options to meet the requirements of multiple business sectors, with the most appropriate dispensers, hand drying options and consumables.

In addition to hand washing and sanitising, hand drying, toilet tissue, feminine hygiene bins and disposal services, urinal services, air freshening, baby changing and water management products, Elis also offers some of the latest technology to maximise hygiene. Products include the Biozone air purification system and Dyson hand dryers, with HEPA filter and antimicrobial coating.

The Elis range includes no-touch options for hand washing, hand sanitising, hand drying and feminine hygiene bins. Free-standing hand sanitiser stations are also available.

Elis also supplies and launders workwear, linen and mats for businesses of all sizes throughout the UK.





**Find out more:**  
**<https://campaigns.elislaundry.com/washroom-service>**  
**0800 616691.**

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**[uk.elis.com/en](https://uk.elis.com/en)**