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Extension - Safe Produce Indiana

Assembling A Low-Cost Handwash Station

OVERVIEW

On a produce farm, it is extremely important for workers to wash their hands frequently to prevent contamination of produce. Workers must wash their hands before starting or returning to work, after using the restroom, after eating or smoking, after touching animals or animal waste, and any other times that hands may become contaminated. Because of this, it is important to have accessible handwash stations at all points in the process, including in the field. Hand sanitizer is not a substitute for proper hand washing. Since it is not feasible to run plumbing to most fields, this poster reviews necessary parts for a temporary handwash station on the farm.

1 Clean container for water

You will want a large, clean container to house clean water that will be used for handwashing. This container should be fully enclosed to protect the water and have a method for turning the water on and off. This station uses an Aqua-tainer that holds 7 gallons of water. It is available online and at some home and outdoor stores. (Price: \$15-\$20)

Water inside of the jug must be clean and replaced when empty. Water is not required to be hot.

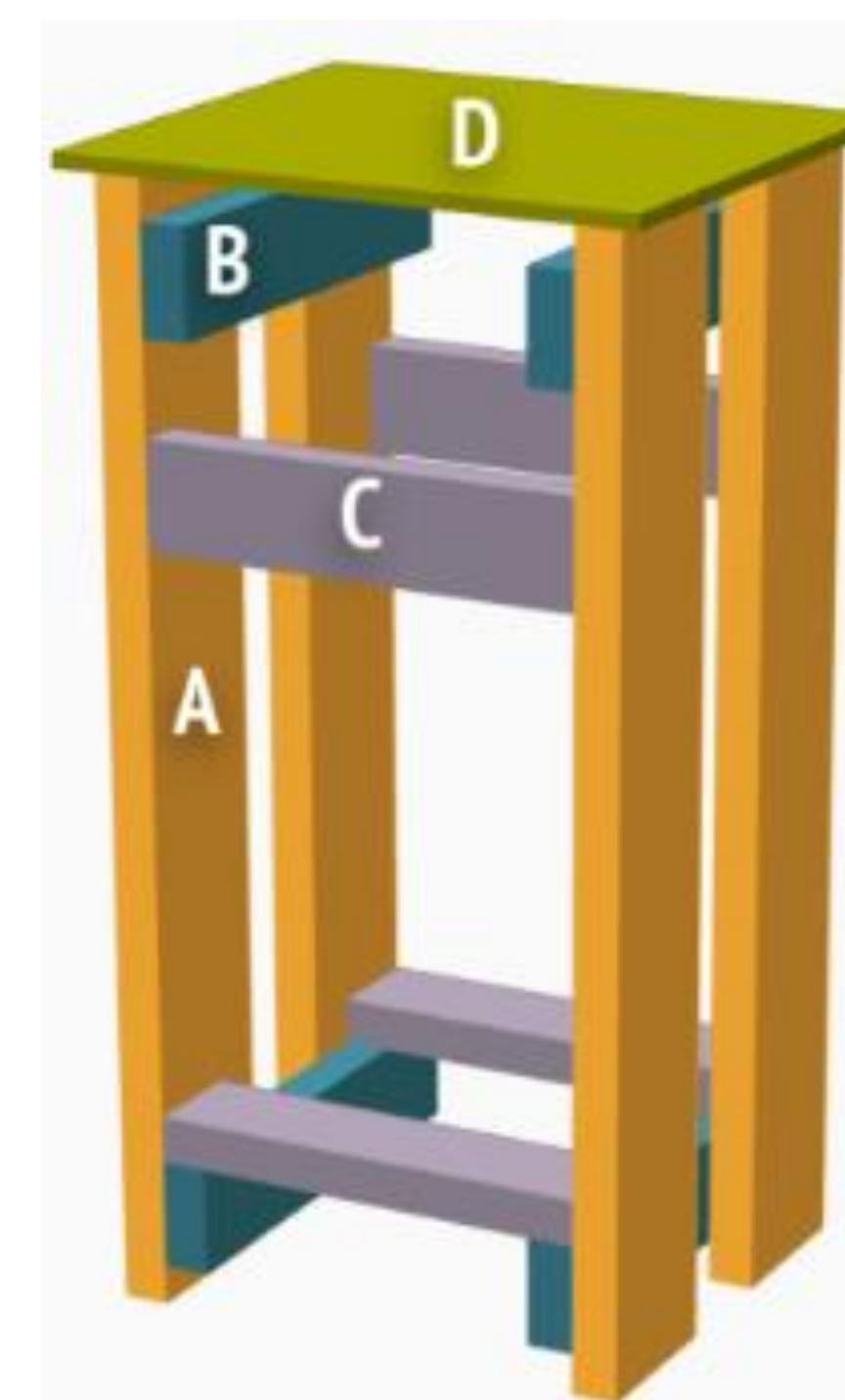
2 Receptacle to house materials

A handwash station must include a covered receptacle or place to house paper towels and soap so they are protected from contamination. In this example, the paper towels are housed in a plastic dishpan. (Cost: \$4-\$8)

3 Table to hold handwash station

This table is designed to hold the water container, paper towels, and trashcan. The table in this example was made from the following materials:

- A. Legs
4 - 2 x 6 cut to 36" long.
- B. Leg connectors
4 - 2 x 4 cut to 15" long, or to fit the length of the dishpan.
- C. Cross pieces
4 - 2 x 4 cut to 14 1/4" long, or to fit the width of the dishpan.
- D. Plywood
1/2" thick or more, cut to 16" x 18", or to fit top of stand with a small overhang.



Credit: University of Minnesota

4 Soap and paper towels

Soap and paper towels must always be well-stocked and protected from contamination. Soap can be liquid or bar soap. Towels must be one-time use or laundered after each use.

5 Trash can for waste

A handwash station should include a receptacle such as a trash can for workers to deposit used paper towels. The receptacle should have a lid to prevent waste from blowing onto the field. Used paper towels should be disposed of in the receptacle and never in the field or on the floor.

6 Container to capture used water

An open container should be placed under the handwash station to capture wastewater from handwashing. In this example, a standard 5-gallon bucket was used. Wastewater in the bucket should never be emptied on the produce field or in areas of high foot traffic.

Acknowledgements

The plans used to assemble this handwash station are from a publication from University of Minnesota Extension. You can view the full plans and instructions for assembling the handwash station by visiting <https://extension.umn.edu/growing-safe-food/handwashing-station>, or by scanning the QR code.



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