

Insider Tips for Acing the Leapfrog Hand Hygiene Assessment



Expert insights, practical strategies,
and insider tips to help hospitals
navigate Leapfrog assessments
and maximize their scores.



What is Leapfrog?

The Leapfrog Group is a nonprofit organization that collects and reports information about patient safety and quality of care in hospitals to drive improvements in healthcare safety, quality, and affordability.

The Leapfrog Hospital Survey is an annual, optional survey that asks hospitals to report infection rates, patient safety practices, C-section rates, and more. The Leapfrog survey contains 21 questions specifically related to hand hygiene. These questions cover training and education, infrastructure, monitoring feedback, and culture.

Understanding Leapfrog's Two Assessment Types

- **Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade:** Non-optional assessment assigning letter grades (A-F) to hospitals based on safety measures. Published twice yearly and widely used by consumers and health plans.
- **Leapfrog Hospital Survey:** Voluntary, hospital-led assessment providing benchmarking data on quality and safety measures including hand hygiene. Hospitals submit their own documentation and receive comparative performance data.

Insider Tips for Scoring Well

Successfully navigating the Leapfrog Hand Hygiene Survey requires more than good intentions—it takes strategy, documentation, and a clear understanding of what's being assessed. These insider tips can help your hospital maximize its score and avoid common missteps.

The "Survey as Tutoring" Approach

- Think of the Survey as tutoring and the Safety Grade as the final exam.
- Use Survey results to identify improvement areas before your Safety Grade assessment.
- Utilize the November 30th deadline for performance updates if you make improvements.

Strategic Survey Completion

- Use Leapfrog's "Survey Binder" tool for all required documentation and criteria.
- Complete the survey in hard copy first and use the scoring algorithm for preliminary results.
- Review the scoring rubric to understand weighted priorities in the assessment.

The Observation Secret

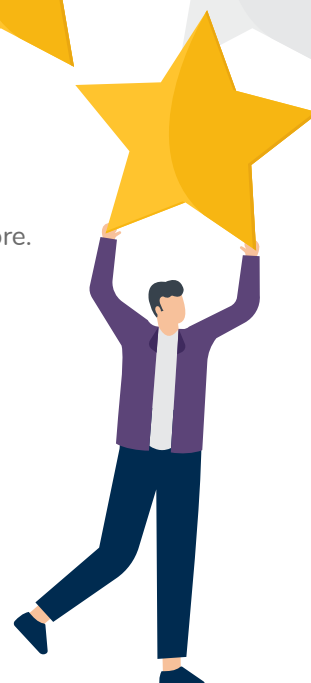
★ **Critical insight:** Leapfrog cares that observations are being conducted, not what the actual hand hygiene performance rate is.

- Focus on meeting the observation quantity requirements rather than worrying about performance rates.
- Document observation methodology thoroughly.



Unit-by-Unit Approach

- Each hospital (not health system) receives its own grade.
- Focus resources on underperforming units that can impact your overall score.
- Remember that all patient care areas count, including PACUs, observation units, and EDs.



Common Mistakes That Can Lower Your Leapfrog Score

Avoid these pitfalls to help your hospital earn top grades on the Leapfrog Hand Hygiene Survey.

Leadership and Accountability Gaps

- Failing to secure written or verbal commitment from C-suite executives (CEO, CMO, CNO).
- Not incorporating hand hygiene into leadership accountability metrics.
- Not recognizing that each facility receives its own score, regardless of health system performance.
- Failing to use facility-specific strategies for improvement.

Observation and Monitoring Errors

- Not conducting the required observations, which drops performance.
- Failing to collect data from a representative sample of roles (physicians, nurses, techs).
- Failing to document validation of electronic monitoring systems.

Strategic Misconceptions

- Forgetting that while the compliance rate itself isn't scored, good hand hygiene practices will improve other metrics that Leapfrog does measure.
- Not using the optional questions as intelligence for future mandatory requirements.
- Missing the opportunity to update survey results by the November 30th deadline.



Direct Observation vs. Electronic Monitoring Standards

Observations must be made via either Direct Observation or Electronic Monitoring. Key requirements for each method include, but are not limited to:

Direct Observation Standards

- Observers must immediately intervene when individuals are noncompliant. The observations must include both opportunities and compliance rate. * See Hawthorne Effect (next page)
- The observation must be specific to an individual, not aggregated.
- Observations must be conducted across all days of the week and all shifts proportional to individuals who interact with the patients.
- A variety of roles must be represented in observations (nurses, physicians, techs).

Electronic Monitoring Standards

- The system has to identify the hand hygiene opportunity, and that the hand hygiene was actually performed.
- Opportunities must be tied to individuals, and the observations should represent different roles.
- Direct observations must also be conducted for coaching and intervention purposes.
- The hospital must validate the electronic monitoring system.

The Hawthorne Effect

***Note that direct observers must immediately intervene, which means they can't truly be "secret."** This will artificially inflate hand hygiene rates by up to 300% due to the Hawthorne Effect. The only practical way to combat this is to have a separate team of rotating observers to try and remain "secret."

Direct Observation: A Resource-Intensive Route

Based on data collected by hospital partners, it takes 6-8 minutes to record a hand hygiene observation. If a hospital has 250 beds with 8 clinical units, it will need 1,600 observations per month. On the low end, this equates to 160 hours per month just for observations.

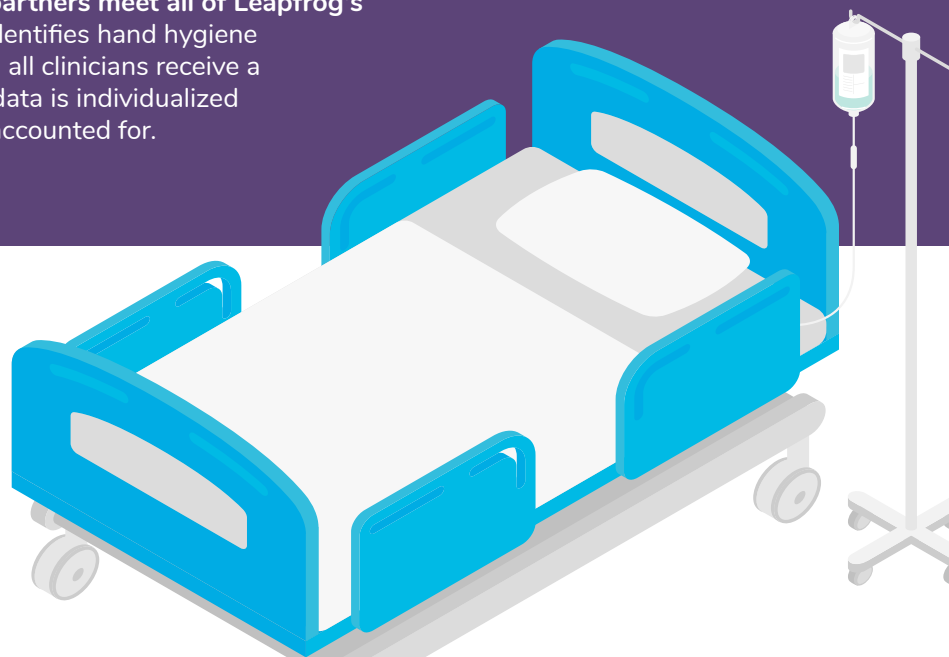
This doesn't factor in the time needed to discuss times when the staff do not perform hand hygiene. This means that a full-time employee will be needed for every 250 beds in the health system.

While few hospitals have the resources to hire additional support for hand hygiene observations, this labor-intensive route diverts existing resources from providing patient care. For nurses who are already spread thin in understaffed facilities, this extra workload can contribute to burnout.

An Easier Way To Meet Leapfrog's Standards

Meeting Leapfrog's standards is much easier and cheaper with an electronic hand hygiene monitoring system. While the SwipeSense system passes the monitoring assessment with flying colors, not all electronic monitoring systems meet the guidelines.

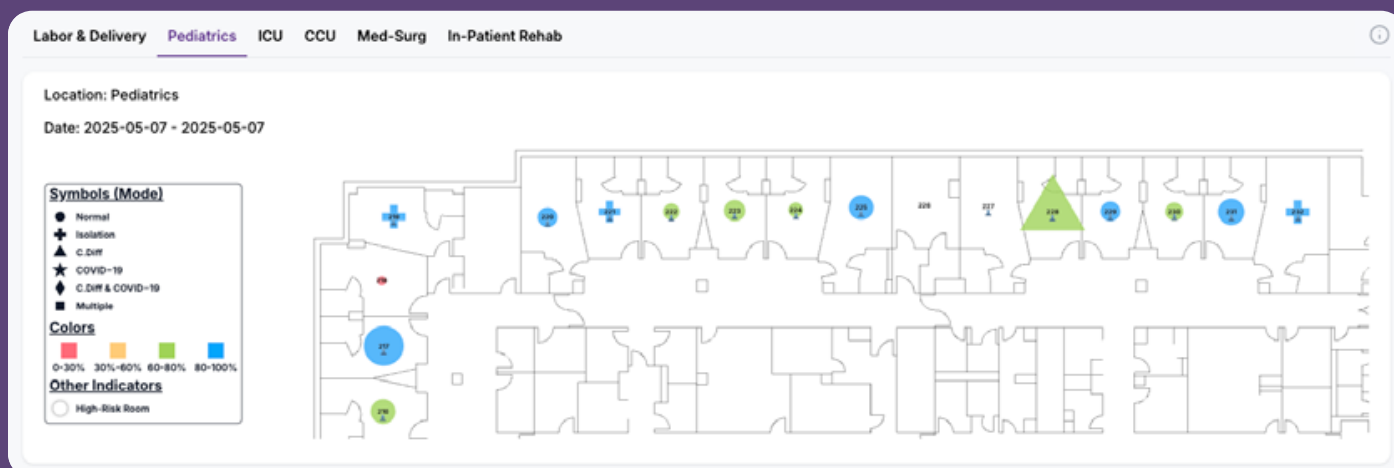
SwipeSense easily helps hospital partners meet all of Leapfrog's criteria. The system automatically identifies hand hygiene opportunities and performance, and all clinicians receive a badge reel, which ensures that the data is individualized and that all clinicians and roles are accounted for.



Data Visualization for Leapfrog Hand Hygiene Improvement

When it comes to meeting Leapfrog's hand hygiene standards, having the right data isn't enough—hospitals need actionable insights. The SwipeSense Real-Time Intervention Blueprint™ transforms complex hand hygiene data into visual intelligence that provides unit managers with location-based compliance insights that support Leapfrog requirements in several ways:

- **Location-Based Analysis:** Each symbol on the map represents a room. The larger the symbol, the more opportunities captured; the redder the symbol, the worse the hand hygiene performance. This visualization helps managers quickly identify which specific rooms have compliance issues, rather than just focusing on individuals.
- **Root Cause Identification:** When reviewing why certain rooms consistently show poor compliance, managers can investigate environmental factors like the placement of sanitizer dispensers, room layout challenges, or whether high-acuity patients in those rooms create unique workflow challenges.
- **Comprehensive Staff Analysis:** After identifying problematic rooms, managers can examine which staff members access those rooms, including both unit staff and visiting departments like EVS or therapy. This holistic view helps identify whether the issue is room-specific, staff-specific, or a combination of factors.



Benefits of Electronic Hand Hygiene Monitoring

SwipeSense provides facilities with the tools to earn great marks on the Leapfrog Hand Hygiene Survey, while continuously improving your facility's hand hygiene and reducing HAIs. The system:

- Collects individual data
- Doesn't interfere with clinical workflows
- Offers real-time feedback with a Natural Language Voice Reminder™
- Automatically adapts to changing clinical conditions
- Offers unmatched flexibility, data and insights
- Uses a systematic six-phase process proven to support behavior change



Get in Touch



SWIPE
SENSE

SwipeSense, Inc.

1355 Peachtree St. NE
Suite 700
Atlanta GA 30309

Learn more about arming your hospital
with the best system to score well on
the Leapfrog Hand Hygiene Survey.

[Contact Our Team](#)

[Request a Custom Demo](#)

