
Overview

This standard concerns minimising the risk of contamination and cross infection when laundering used linen. This standard applies to designated areas for laundering within health and social care settings.

It does not cover radioactive linen where additional precautions will be required.

The standard should be used alongside relevant legislation, guidelines, policies, procedures and protocols.

Users of this standard will need to ensure that practice reflects up to date information and policies.

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

1. access and accurately interpret all relevant work instructions and information
2. work safely at all times and in accordance with all relevant legislation, guidelines, policies, procedures and protocols
3. deal promptly and effectively with any problems within your control and report those which cannot be solved
4. identify and minimise hazards and risk in the workplace
5. perform effective hand hygiene and use personal protective equipment in accordance with the local and national policies/procedures for handling used linen in the laundry
6. sort used linen arriving in the laundry in the designated area
7. where used linen is received in a water-soluble bag, ensure this is not opened and is placed intact into the appropriate washing machine
8. report any inappropriate items found during sorting, including individual's belongings or care equipment, and retain them for return or disposal
9. report any sharps found during sorting and dispose of them safely and immediately in an approved sharps container using appropriate personal protective equipment
10. take appropriate action where an exposure occurs while laundering used linen
11. fill the washing machine to the correct level, add the appropriate detergent and select the correct cycle and temperature for the type of linen to be washed, in accordance with local and national policy/procedures and manufacturer's instructions
12. ensure that detergents and disinfectants are used and stored in accordance with regulations concerning substances that are hazardous to health and manufacturer's instructions
13. monitor and adjust the machine as required to ensure the wash, rinse and drying cycles are completed as intended
14. unload the machine and, if appropriate, dispose of any water soluble bags after the wash.
15. check if any items remain visibly soiled, report the potential cycle failure to the relevant others and re-laundry used items
16. remove personal protective equipment used during the loading process discarding any disposable equipment in an appropriate waste receptacle.

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17. clean or disinfect any non-disposable equipment ready for re-use
 18. maintain the segregation of clean and used linen and associated equipment
 19. before handling clean linen, perform hand hygiene and use personal protective equipment in accordance with the local policy/procedures
 20. press, sort and package clean linen ready for distribution, checking to ensure it is visibly clean and free of stains, removing and reporting any items that are not fit for use
 21. ensure all laundering equipment is kept clean including all contact areas on machines including door handles and fascias to prevent cross contamination
 22. dispose of waste in accordance with organisational procedures
 23. complete and store all relevant documentation in accordance with organisational requirements

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

1. the current legislation, guidelines, policies, procedures and protocols which are relevant to your work practice and to which you must adhere
2. the scope and limitations of your own competence, responsibilities and accountability as it applies to your job role
3. how to access and interpret all relevant work instructions and information
4. specific procedures for reporting issues which are beyond your competence, responsibilities and accountability
5. the duty to report any acts or omissions that could be unsafe/detrimental to you or others
6. the hazards and risks which may arise during the execution of your work role and how you can minimise these
7. the correct use of any equipment and PPE to protect the health and safety of you and others
8. relevant standard infection prevention and control precautions, national legislation/guidance and local policies/procedures
9. the chain of infection
10. hierarchy of controls
11. the key moments of hand hygiene
12. how approaches in clinical and social environments may differ
13. how to access facilities for hand hygiene
14. effective techniques for maintaining hand hygiene
15. how to access first aid provision

16. the appropriate personal protective equipment to use when transporting linen
17. the different colour-coded bags and waste receptacles available and the correct use of each
18. how to handle segregated bagged linen safely at points of collection and delivery
19. how to handle and dispose of sharps safely
20. the different colour-coded bags, water-soluble bags and waste receptacles available and the correct use of each
21. procedures for safely handling used linen in the laundry
22. how to maintain a workflow that ensures segregation of clean and used linen
23. how to operate laundry equipment and machinery
24. the washing and drying cycles and the detergents and disinfectants used for different types of linen
25. how to report adverse events, accidents and incidents
26. the range of appropriate actions to take where an exposure occurs while transporting used or clean linen:
 - perform first aid immediately to the exposed area, following organisational procedures
 - report the incident immediately and seek further advice on the need for further medical care
 - document the incident, following organisational procedures
27. how and when to report any issues
28. how to dispose of waste in accordance with organisational procedures
29. how to complete and safely store all relevant documentation in accordance with organisational requirements

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Minimise the risk of spreading infection when laundering used linen



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