

IPC11.2012 Minimise the risk of spreading infection when laundering used linen

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. Users of this standard will need to ensure that practice reflects up to date information and policies. Version No 2

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

You will need to know and understand:

1. relevant standard infection prevention and control precautions, national legislation/guidance and local policies/procedures
2. health and safety regulations covering your area of work
3. regulations and guidelines concerning hazardous materials
4. the chain of infection
5. how to access facilities for hand hygiene
6. effective techniques for maintaining hand hygiene
7. how to access first aid provision
8. the appropriate personal protective equipment to use when laundering linen
9. how to safely remove and dispose of personal protective equipment
10. how to handle and dispose of sharps safely
11. the different colour-coded bags, water-soluble bags and waste receptacles available and the correct use of each
12. procedures for safely handling used linen in the laundry
13. how to maintain a work flow that ensures segregation of clean and used linen
14. how to operate laundry equipment and machinery
15. the washing and drying cycles and the detergents and disinfectants used for different types of linen
16. your individual role and responsibilities, and the responsibilities of others
17. how to complete the relevant documentation required in your area of activity
18. how to report adverse events, accidents and incidents
19. how and when to report issues that are within and outside your scope of practice

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

You must be able to do the following:

- 1.ensure all of your recommended occupational immunisations are up to date
- 2.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
- 3.sort used linen arriving in the laundry in the designated area
- 4.where used linen is received in a water-soluble bag, ensure this is not opened and is placed intact into the appropriate washing machine
- 5.report any inappropriate items found during sorting, including patient's/service user's belongings or care equipment, and retain them for return or disposal
- 6.report any sharps found during sorting and dispose of them safely and immediately in an approved sharps container using appropriate personal protective equipment
- 7.where an exposure occurs while sorting linen:
 - 1.perform first aid immediately to the exposed area, following national/local guidelines
 - 2.report the incident immediately and seek further advice on the need for further medical care
 - 3.document the incident, following local policies
- 8.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
- 9.ensure that detergents and disinfectants are used and stored in accordance with regulations concerning substances that are hazardous to health and manufacturer's instructions
- 10.start and then monitor and adjust the machine as required to ensure the wash, rinse and drying cycles are completed as intended
- 11.unload the machine and, if appropriate, dispose of any water soluble bags after the wash. Check if any items remain visibly soiled, report the potential cycle failure to the appropriate manager and re launder used items
- 12.remove personal protective equipment used during the loading process discarding any disposable equipment in an appropriate waste receptacle. Clean or disinfect any non-disposable equipment ready for re-use
- 13.maintain the segregation of clean and used linen and associated equipment
- 14.before handling clean linen, perform hand hygiene and use personal protective equipment in accordance with the local policy/procedures
- 15.press, sort and package clean linen ready for distribution, checking to ensure it is all visibly clean and free of stains, removing and reporting any items that are not fit for use
- 16.ensure all laundering equipment is kept clean including all contact areas on machines including door handles and fascias to prevent cross contamination

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This National Occupational Standard was developed by Skills for Health. There are additional NOS on the Skills for Health website relating to Decontamination. This standard links with the following dimension within the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework

