

Laundry Facilities in Non Acute Care

Infection Prevention & Control Best Practice Guidelines

EQUIPMENT

- Prior to purchasing equipment, advice must be sought from the [HSSBC No-Go List](#), Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) team and Facilities Maintenance & Operations (FM&O)
- Machines must be installed in strict accordance with manufacture's guidance and regulations
 - Machines should be installed professionally with a cover over the drainage pipe to prevent aerosol contamination
- Therefore, machines must have programming ability to meet disinfection standards (industrial standard)
- A dryer is recommended to ensure that linen/items of clothing are thoroughly dried
- Adequate maintenance schedules should be developed; normally this will be done via FM&O, to ensure the machine is maintained as per manufacturer's instructions
 - Records of maintenance/service must be kept
- Washing powders/solutions and other substances must be kept in a locked storage cupboard
 - Material Safety Data Sheets for any potentially hazardous substances must be

ENVIRONMENT

- The laundry room should have appropriate ventilation
- The laundry floor must be of a smooth, impermeable and made from material that is easily cleaned
- Walls must be in sound condition and easily cleanable
- A clear schedule for cleaning the laundry environment must be in place prior to the room being commissioned
 - All horizontal surfaces must be damp-dusted on a daily basis
- All machinery must be maintained in a clean dust-free condition and must be covered by a service agreement which supports prompt repair or replacement of the machine in case of breakdown
 - Records of maintenance/service must be kept

Laundry Facilities in Non Acute Care (continued)

FACILITIES

- There will be a designated hand wash sink available for staff/residents/clients within the laundry room
 - Hand wash sinks and taps must be cleaned daily or when contaminated

THE LAUNDERING PROCESS

- All linen/clothing should enter the laundry room on the 'soiled side' and should not be stored but quickly processed
- Many micro-organisms will be physically removed from the linen/items of clothing, by the detergent and water during the washing cycle. Washing at high temperatures, above the normal domestic 40°C wash, will allow the temperature of the water to disinfect the linen/items of clothing
 - The machine should reach 65°C for a minimum of 10 minutes or 71°C for 3 minutes in order to achieve disinfection
- Foul/infected linen should not be handled any more than is absolutely necessary
- Foul / infected items which cannot be laundered on a hot wash can be disinfected by adding hypochlorite (bleach) at 150 parts per million to the final rinse
 - Check the individual washing instructions before adding bleach to clothes
- Soiled or foul items, which are not washable should be processed externally and dry cleaned
- Always take care that the machine is not overloaded or it will not wash effectively.
- Once clothing is removed from the dryer it should be stored in a clean area, above floor level and not be kept in the laundry room

STORAGE OF CLEAN & DRY LINEN/ITEMS OF CLOTHING

- There should be a separate area for drying, ironing and storage of clean linen,
 - away from soiled linen, to prevent cross contamination
- Clean linen should be stored in a dry area above the floor level
- It must not be stored in bathrooms or soiled utility rooms

RISK OF CONTAMINATION

- Patients/residents/clients and staff must not be put at risk during the handling, disposal and transportation of used linen/items of clothing

REFERENCES

Health Protection Agency (2004) Infection Control Guidelines Care Homes (revised 2007).
http://www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAwebFile/HPAweb_C/1194947342171