



## IC9: 0600 LAUNDRY

### 1.0 STANDARD

All staff must follow Routine Practices when handling soiled laundry.

Laundry refers to personal laundry, resident specific, as well as facility linen.

Regular laundry will follow a one wash cycle.

Heavily soiled laundry will follow a two wash cycle.

Facilities will develop a process for identifying regular and heavily soiled laundry.

Clean linen that has been dropped on the floor is considered soiled.

Melt away bags are not recommended.

### 2.0 PROCEDURE

- Store and transport clean laundry separate from soiled laundry
- Apply moisture-resistant mattress and pillow covers to prevent soiling mattresses and pillows
- Change bed linen at least weekly and replace wet and visibly soiled linen as needed
- Sort laundry with a minimal of handling
- Remove solid waste from laundry using a gloved hand and toilet tissue and discard into toilet or hopper
- Laundry is not to be rinsed or soaked in the toilet or sink in resident rooms or in soiled utility room hopper or sink
- Ensure that linen is free of biomedical waste, sharps, instruments, and patient's personal belongings before placing in laundry bag
- Roll wet or heavily soiled items inwards without contaminating your clothing and place into an impervious laundry bag or line the laundry bag with a plastic bag
- Bag all soiled laundry in the room at point of use
- Separate laundry per facility guidelines, placing soiled linen and personal laundry in the appropriate hampers
- Ensure heavily soiled laundry is differentiated from regular laundry
- The process for sorting laundry processed off site has not changed
- Double bagging is not required
- Close soiled laundry bags when 2/3 full



- Collect soiled laundry bags at regular intervals, at least daily
- Wear appropriate PPE: gloves, gowns, mask and eye protection if sprays or splashes of body fluid likely and when handling and sorting soiled laundry and loading washing machines.
- Remove gloves and gowns, and perform hand hygiene after contact with soiled laundry
- Wipe down transport carts before loading with clean laundry
- Cover clean laundry carts during transport and storage
- Clean laundry is transported separately from soiled laundry

## **2.1 REGULAR LAUNDRY**

- When handling soiled laundry staff is to wear the appropriate PPE: gloves and gowns at all times and masks and eye protection if sprays or splashes likely. Wash hands following the removal of PPE and before contact with clean laundry.
- Laundry is to be processed in the machine with the minimal of handling. No pre soaking in sinks is to be done; any solid waste will have been removed.
- When laundering using hot water (71C) use a 25 minute cycle with the measured amount of laundry detergent designed for hot water as per manufacturer's guidelines. A booster may be required to achieve this water temperature.
- When laundering using cold water (22C-25C) use a 25 minute cycle with the measured amount of cold-water detergent as per manufacturer's guidelines. Addition of disinfectants and souring agents for heavily soiled laundry is required for facility linen; chlorine bleach can be used for white loads, oxygen-based bleach for non-white loads.
- When laundering personal laundry follow the label directions for selection of hot or cold water wash. Use the appropriate laundry detergent for the water temperature with the time cycles indicated above.
- Run the load through a complete wash, rinse, and spin cycle.
- Select the dryer cycle according to the label directions, or hang to dry.

## **2.2 HEAVILY SOILED LAUNDRY**

- When handling soiled laundry staff is to wear the appropriate PPE: gloves and gowns at all times and masks and eye protection if sprays or splashes likely. Wash hands following the removal of PPE and before contact with clean laundry.
- Heavily soiled laundry will be processed using the two wash procedure.
- Create a half load only, do not overfill washing machine.



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- When laundering using cold water (22C-25C) use a 25 minute cycle with the measured amount of cold-water detergent as per manufacturer's guidelines. Addition of disinfectants and souring agents for heavily soiled laundry is required for both personal and facility linen; chlorine bleach can be used for white loads, oxygen-based bleach for non-white loads.
- After the first cycle is completed, repeat for a second cycle, detergent, wash rinse and spin cycle.
- There is no need to disinfect the washing machine between loads.
- Select the dryer cycle according to the label directions, or hang to dry.

### **3.0 LAUNDRY ROOM SET UP AND LAUNDRY STAFF**

- A clear separation of clean and soiled areas for processing laundry is required.
- Sinks need to be available for hand washing in the laundry room.
- Staff need to have ongoing education on the detergents and disinfectants used and be informed of any changes to products
- Access to and knowledge of donning and doffing PPE is required
- Minimize the number of staff responsible for laundry
- Maintain education for staff that process laundry to ensure consistency of best practices.
- When replacing laundry equipment consideration should be given to commercial machines as they provide good control of water temperature, cycle time and chemical additions.

### **4.0 REFERENCES**

1. Health Canada 1999. Infection Control Guidelines: Routine Practices and Additional Precautions for Preventing the Transmission of Infection in Health Care.
2. Health Canada Infection Control Guidelines. Handwashing, Cleaning, Disinfecting and Sterilization in Health Care (1998).
3. Canadian Committee on Antibiotic Resistance (CCAR): Infection Prevention and Control Best Practices for Long Term Care, Home and Community Care including Health Care Offices and Ambulatory Clinics. June 2007.



4. CDC/HICPAC Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Health Care Facilities, 2003.
5. APIC Infection Control Guidelines, Ch. 103: Laundry, Linens, and Textiles, 2005.
6. Gibson, L. et al. Use of quantitative microbial risk assessment for evaluation of the benefits of laundry sanitation. APIC Dec 1999, S34-39.
7. Otero, R. B. Healthcare textile infection control guide.  
<http://www.cinetwork.com/otero/textile/hticguidelines.html>
8. Public Health Association of Canada. Hand washing, Cleaning, Sterilization and Disinfection in Health Care. 1998.
9. WorkSafe BC, OHS Regulation, Part 8, Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment, Amended B.C Reg 312/2003, effective Oct 29, 2003.