



HOSPITAL INFECTION CONTROL

POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON LAUNDRY AND LINEN MANAGEMENT

Doc .No.	MMCH / P / HIC / 07
NABH Std. Ref	HIC / 02 / H
Issue No.	01
Rev. No.	02
Date	19.06.2023

1.0 PURPOSE:

1.1 To describe the protocols on handling infected linen in the hospital setting.

2.0 SCOPE:

2.1 Hospital Wide – All Inpatient care areas

3.0 RESPONSIBILITY:

3.1 Nursing staff

3.2 Housekeeping staff

3.3 Laundry In - charge

4.0 ABBREVIATION:

4.1 NABH : National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare providers.

4.2 HIC : Hospital Infection Control

5.0 DEFINITION:

5.1 Categories of used linen:

5.1.1 **Soiled Linen:** Linen visibly contaminated by blood, body fluids, secretions and excretions are “Soiled / contaminated / dirty / fouled”.

5.1.2 **Used Linen:** All other used linen is termed “used”.

6.0 REFERENCE:

6.1 **NABH:** NABH Standards for Hospitals, Fifth Edition, April 2020.

6.2 **HIC.2:** The organization implements the policies and procedures laid down in the Infection Control Manual.

7.0 POLICY:

7.1 Hospital linen or clothing:

7.1.1 Shall be changed and laundered between patients change.

7.1.2 Shall be changed daily for patients nursed in isolation or

7.1.3 When they are soiled or fouled shall be changed.

7.2 **Pillows and mattresses:** Impervious cover of these items shall be routinely wiped clean between patients change with hot water and detergent. If surface contamination with blood or

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body fluids occurs clean with hypochlorite 0.5% in a detergent solution. They shall not go into the laundry. They shall be cleaned at the point of use or department. The damaged item shall be discarded as clinical waste.

- 7.3 All cloth items (e.g., surgical drapes, gowns, wrappers) used during a procedure shall be considered infectious and they shall be laundered even if there is no visible contamination.
- 7.4 Housekeeping and laundry personnel shall wear PPE (aprons, gloves and eye wear) when collecting, handling, transporting, sorting and washing soiled linen.
- 7.5 Disposable linen shall be used for patients with/ suspected suffering from anthrax, small pox and viral hemorrhagic fever.
- 7.6 If hospital linen has been used in these circumstances, it shall be treated as clinical waste.

8.0 PROCEDURE:

- 8.1 Handle soiled linen as little as possible, while collecting and transporting with minimum agitation and contact to avoid accidental injury and spreading of microorganisms in the environment.
- 8.2 Place soiled / contaminated linen in impervious bags for transportation to avoid any spills or drips of blood, body fluids, secretions or excretions.
- 8.3 Carry soiled linen in covered containers or plastic impervious bags to prevent spills and splashes, and confine the soiled linen to designated areas (interim storage area) until transported to the laundry.

8.4 PPE for housekeeping staff and Laundry staffs:

8.4.1 Types of PPE:

- 8.4.1.1 Gloves: Thick utility or heavy-duty house hold gloves to minimize the risk of accidental injury from a needle-stick or other sharp object, including broken glass.
- 8.4.1.2 Apron: Made of plastic or rubber.
- 8.4.1.3 Closed shoes
- 8.4.1.4 Protective eye wear.

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8.4.2 Usage of PPE:

- 8.4.2.1 Handling disinfectant solutions.
- 8.4.2.2 Collecting and handling soiled linen
- 8.4.2.3 Transporting soiled linen
- 8.4.2.4 Sorting soiled linen
- 8.4.2.5 Hand washing soiled linen
- 8.4.2.6 Loading automatic washers

8.5 Processing of linen: Consists of

8.5.1 Segregation & Collection of linen:

- Personnel handling and collecting soiled linen should wear heavy-duty gloves, apron and mask.
- Soiled linen should be collected and placed in carts designated for soiled linen.
- Soiled linen should be handled as little as possible and with minimum agitation to prevent gross microbial contamination of the air & personnel handling the linen.
- **All soiled and infected linen should be bagged at the location of use in to a yellow bag, and should not be sorted or pre-rinsed in patient care areas.** So tag should be attached (number, type of linen) on the bag.
- Handle bags by the neck only.
- Linen used for patients with MRSA, HIV, Hepatitis B, cholera and linen from the isolation ward in the yellow bag is decontaminated in laundry.
- Bags used to collect and transport soiled linen will be of sufficient quantity to contain wet or soiled linen and prevent leakage during transport.
- In the event of accidental spillage of used linen, wear gloves & Re-bag in appropriate bag. Clean the area with 1 % Sodium hypochlorite and leave for 30 minutes. If further advice required, contact the Infection Control Team.

8.5.2 Transport of linen:

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Transport used linen and soiled linen separately in bags. Trolleys for clean linen, in transit, shall be covered with a washable or disposable cover. Used linen shall not be carried across the patient-care areas, increasing the risk of dissemination of bacteria into the air, on to the floor, staff uniforms and bodies, or placed on to the floor or bed side table. Transport, collected soiled linen in closed leak - proof bags, containers with lids or covered carts to the processing area daily or more often, as needed. The linen bag shall be not more than 2/3 full and appropriately sealed before being removed from the ward or point of collection. The linen bags shall be collected and dropped into the trolley which opens into the laundry area, if awaiting collection, these bag shall be stored in a secure designated storage area protected from the weather and vermin. The interior of vehicles after transporting dirty linen shall be cleaned with detergent and water.

8.5.3 Sorting the linen

- Sorting of linen before washing shall be done, in the laundry area only.
- Sorting shall be performed carefully as soiled linen from the operating room or other procedure areas infrequently contain sharps (scalpels, sharp-tipped scissors, hypodermic and suture needles and sharp-tipped towel clips).
- Infectious linen must not be sorted and loaded in to a washing machine directly.
- Wear PPEs while handling soiled linen, from patients' rooms as there maybe soiled dressings, blood-stained cloths or cloths wet with other body fluids.

8.5.4 Washing Protocol:

- The linen is transported in buckets to local washing
- Dirty and infected linen is transported separately from the soiled linen.
- Wash used linen and heavily soiled linen separately.
- The linen is directly emptied into the dedicated containers in specifically allotted area.
- Infected linen must be soaked in 1% hypochlorite solution for 30 minute, wash with plain water before taken in to washing machine
- Normal wash is given again with water for 5 to 10 min.

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- Wash in water with liquid soap to remove all soil, even if not visible:
 - Wash woolen blankets in warm water and dry in the sun, in dryers at specified temperatures or dry-clean.
 - The bags used for linen carrying shall also be washed similar to the linen.
- **The linen is washed in the washing machines, then the washed linen is put into the Hydro-extractor and then into the drier (in winter/ monsoon)/ sun-dried, finally ironed and folded manually and sent to the ward.**

8.5.5 Dispatch of clean linen to different departments

The processed linen would be handed over to respective departments after making entry in the Outward Register in the Laundry Department.

8.4.3 Cleaning of used PPEs:

Equipment	Standard Procedure (reusable)	Disposal
Apron (Disposable preferred)	Clean with soap & water Disinfect with 70% alcohol	Dispose as per policy
Mask (Disposable preferred)	Do not use reusable mask	As above
Eyewear (Disposable preferred)	Clean with soap & water Disinfect with 70% alcohol or soak in 1% hypochlorite for 20 minutes, rinse and dry.	As above
Gown (Disposable preferred)	Launder in hot water (70° -80°C) or Soak in water with bleaching powder 0.5% for 30 minutes, wash again with detergent and water to remove the bleach. Dry in a clothes drier or in the sun.	As above
Cap (Disposable preferred)	Do not use reusable caps	As above
Gloves	Do not use reusable gloves	As above

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