

Infection Control Assessment and Response (ICAR) Tool for General Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Across Settings

Module 9. Healthcare Laundry Facilitator Guide

Healthcare Laundry: This form is intended to aid an ICAR facilitator in the review processes used in healthcare laundry whether it is performed on or offsite. This form is limited to healthcare textiles examples of which include bed linens, towels, washcloths, patient gowns, and uniforms owned by the facility and used in patient or resident care. It is not intended to evaluate personal laundry, such as long-term care resident clothing.

Soiled linen poses a risk of exposure to infectious materials among personnel handling them. Suboptimal handling of laundered textiles may result in environmental contamination and may pose a risk to immunocompromised patients or residents.

Part A. Healthcare Laundry Interview Questions

Laundry Facility

1. Where is healthcare laundry performed? (Select all that apply)

Onsite

Offsite

Unknown

Not Assessed

Other (specify): _____

Healthcare laundry may be processed onsite or offsite. Facilities that contract with healthcare laundries may also have certain units where laundry is also performed onsite. Outsourcing of healthcare laundry does not negate a facility's responsibility to ensure healthcare textiles are processed in a manner that protects personnel and patients/residents.

When **acute care** facilities utilize a contracted laundry facility the Combined Federal Regulations (CFR) 482.12 requires that the facility governing board ensure the services comply with all applicable conditions of participation.

In **ambulatory surgical centers (ASC)**, CFR 416.41 states that, "When services are provided through a contract with an outside resource, the ASC must assure that these services are provided in a safe and effective manner."

In **long-term care**, CFR 483.80 states that personnel must "handle, store, process, and transport linen so as to prevent the spread of infection." Facilities must have structures and processes that provide oversight of contracted services.

Sources:

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-42/chapter-IV/subchapter-G/part-482/subpart-B/section-482.12>

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-42/chapter-IV/subchapter-B/part-416/subpart-C>

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-42/chapter-IV/subchapter-G/part-483>

If offsite,

1a. What is the name of the laundry provider?

1b. Where (i.e., city and state) is the laundry provider located?

Notes



Soiled healthcare laundry

2. Is soiled healthcare laundry bagged or contained, without sorting, at the point of use?

- Yes
- No
- Unknown
- Not Assessed

Soiled laundry should be handled in a manner that avoids contamination of the environment and healthcare personnel clothing. They should not be shaken, sorted, or prerinsed at the point of use.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/environmental/index.html#g>

3. On patient/resident units, how is soiled laundry collected and stored? (select all that apply)

- Bagged, soiled laundry is place in a soiled cart in a soiled utility until transported for laundering
- Bagged, soiled laundry is placed in a laundry chute
- Unknown
- Not Assessed
- Other (specify): _____

Soiled laundry should be contained in bags or containers that clearly indicate they are soiled at the point of use. Hamper covers are not required in patient care areas.

“Laundry chutes should be used in a manner to minimize dispersion of aerosols.” CDC does not recommend an interval for routine visual inspection by infection preventionist or those charged with maintaining the environment of care, however the facility should inspect these areas routinely to ensure the cleanliness of the area.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/environmental/index.html#g>

4. Is soiled laundry maintained at negative pressure to adjacent clean areas?

- Yes
- No
- Unknown
- Not Assessed

“Maintain the receiving area for contaminated healthcare textiles at negative pressure compared with the clean areas of the laundry in accordance with AIA construction standards in effect during the time of facility construction.”

In all facility types (i.e., acute care, specialized outpatient, general outpatient, and long-term care) [ASHRAE](#) Standard 170-2017 indicates that soiled utility and soiled holding areas should be at negative pressure to adjacent areas with a minimum of 2 outdoor air changes per hour (ACH) and 10 total ACH.

Sources:

<https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/environmental/index.html#g>

<https://www.ashrae.org/technical-resources/standards-and-guidelines/standards-addenda/ansi-ashrae-ashe-standard-170-2017-ventilation-of-health-care-facilities> (Acute Care see Table 7.1, Outpatient see Table 8.1, LTC see Table 9.1)

5. At what interval are soiled laundry holding areas cleaned and disinfected?

- Daily
- Weekly
- No scheduled cleaning
- Unknown
- Not assessed
- Other (specify): _____

Soiled laundry holding areas include soiled utilities on the units, laundry chute discharge areas, and soiled laundry holding areas near the loading dock if healthcare laundry is performed offsite.

These areas are anticipated to be heavily contaminated and should undergo at a minimum, daily cleaning and disinfection consistent with other areas of the hospital.

Notes

Healthcare laundry processing – Laundry Facility Onsite or Offsite

6. In the laundry processing area, is a hand cleaning (alcohol-based hand sanitizer or handwashing) station available in the soiled and clean laundry area?

Yes
No
Unknown
Not Assessed

Alcohol-based hand sanitizer (ABHS) or soap and water should be readily accessible in all areas where soiled or clean textiles are handled.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/environmental/index.html#g>

7. Which elements of PPE are available for personnel that handle soiled healthcare laundry to wear? (select all that apply)

Eye protection
Masks
Gloves
Gowns
No PPE available
Unknown
Not Assessed
Other (specify): _____

Personnel that sort soiled laundry should anticipate exposure to heavily soiled textiles and sharps. PPE should include impervious gowns and puncture resistant gloves. Sorting may result in dispersal of contaminants and eye protection and masks may also be needed.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/environmental/index.html#g>

8. Are laundry carts that are used to transport soiled laundry to offsite laundry facilities cleaned and disinfected with EPA-registered hospital disinfectants each time they are received at the laundry facility?

Yes
No
Unknown
Not Assessed
Not applicable, healthcare laundry is not transported offsite

Laundry carts used to transport textiles offsite should be cleaned and disinfected with EPA-registered healthcare disinfectants. This is usually done when soiled carts are emptied, prior to restocking them with laundered textiles for return to the facility.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/hicpac/recommendations/core-practices.html>

9. At what interval are clean laundry work areas (e.g., ironing, folding stations) cleaned and disinfected with an EPA-registered disinfectant? (select the best response)

Daily
Weekly
No scheduled cleaning
Not assessed
Unknown
Other (specify): _____

Work areas on the clean side of the laundry facility may also be considered noncritical surfaces and should be cleaned and disinfected regularly.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/environmental/index.html#g>

Notes

Receiving and staging laundered healthcare textiles

10. Does the facility have a covered loading dock or area for the receipt of laundered textiles?

- Yes
- No
- Unknown
- Not Assessed
- Not applicable, healthcare textiles are not processed offsite

Laundered textiles should remain separated from soiled materials upon receipt at the facility. Loading docks with heavy environmental soil or evidence of infestations with vermin have been associated with outbreaks.

11. Are laundered textiles received from offsite laundries packaged for transport using methods that ensure their cleanliness and protect them from dust and soil during loading, transport, and unloading?

- Yes
- No
- Unknown
- Not Assessed
- Not applicable, healthcare textiles are not processed offsite

Laundered healthcare textiles should be packaged and transported in a manner that will ensure their cleanliness and protect them from dust and soil during interfacility loading, transport, and unloading.

Textiles staged and distributed to the point of use should be protected during movement.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/environmental/index.html#g>

12. Is the laundered textile staging area maintained at positive pressure in relationship to adjacent areas?

- Yes
- No
- Unknown
- Not Assessed

Following laundering, either onsite or offsite, textiles are stored in a clean staging area where they are sorted and prepared for distribution to the point of use. ASHRAE Standard 170-2017, 2021 specifies that laundry storage areas in acute care, outpatient, and long-term care facilities, should be at positive pressure compared to adjacent areas.

Source: <https://www.ashrae.org/technical-resources/standards-and-guidelines/standards-addenda/ansi-ashrae-ashrae-standard-170-2017-ventilation-of-health-care-facilities> (Acute Care see Table 7.1, Outpatient see Table 8.1, LTC see Table 9.1)

13. At what interval does the laundered healthcare textile staging area undergo cleaning and disinfection (select the best response)?

- Daily
- Weekly
- No scheduled cleaning
- Unknown
- Not assessed
- Other (specify): _____

Following laundering, textiles are stored in a clean staging area prior to distribution to the point of use. Offsite packaging is removed, and textiles are placed on clean carts and should be maintained covered for transport to units. Routine environmental cleaning of this area should be consistent with other areas of the healthcare facility.

14. Are carts used **within the facility** to transport laundered textiles cleaned and disinfected every time they are restocked, even if they are never used to transport soiled textiles?

- Yes
- No
- Unknown
- Not Assessed

Laundry carts that transport laundered textiles may become contaminated during storage or transport on units. They should be cleaned each time they are restocked.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/hicpac/recommendations/core-practices.html>

15. How are healthcare textiles protected from environmental contamination during transport until distribution to the point of use?

(Select all that apply)

- Maintained covered during transport within the facility
- Stored covered in a clean area of the inpatient unit
- Stored uncovered in dedicated areas (i.e., a linen room, clean utility)
- Healthcare textiles not protected from contamination during transport
- Unknown
- Not assessed

15a. If stored using a linen cover, at what interval are covers cleaned and disinfected? (select the best response)

- Daily
- Weekly
- No scheduled cleaning
- Not applicable, linen covers not used
- Unknown
- Not assessed
- Other (specify): _____

Laundered healthcare textiles should be packaged and transported in a manner that will ensure their cleanliness and protect them from dust and soil during interfacility loading, transport, and unloading. There are a variety of methods facilities can use to protect clean laundry from environmental contamination until used. Laundered textiles may be stored in hallway alcoves or clean storage areas. Clean storage areas should be maintained at positive pressure to adjacent areas. Equipment (e.g., laundry cart covers) should be cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis.

Sources: <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/environmental/index.html#g>
<https://www.ashrae.org/technical-resources/standards-and-guidelines/standards-addenda/ansi-ashrae-ashe-standard-170-2017-ventilation-of-health-care-facilities> (Acute Care see Table 7.1, Outpatient see Table 8.1, LTC see Table 9.1)

16. At what interval are laundered textile storage areas on inpatient/resident units cleaned and disinfected? (select the best response)

- Daily
- Weekly
- No scheduled cleaning
- Unknown
- Not assessed
- Other (specify): _____

Facilities should ensure routine environmental cleaning and disinfection of linen storage areas on inpatient units consistent with other areas of the hospital.

Notes

Part B. Laundry Personnel Training, Quality Assurance

Personnel training

1. Do all personnel that handle healthcare textiles have infection prevention training including:

1a. Handling of soiled textiles

Yes No Unknown Not Assessed

1b. Selection, donning, and doffing of PPE

Yes No Unknown Not Assessed

1c. Maintaining cleanliness of laundered textiles

Yes No Unknown Not Assessed

Facilities should, “develop processes to ensure that all healthcare personnel understand and are competent to adhere to infection prevention requirements as they perform their roles and responsibilities.”

Training should not be limited to laundry-facility personnel. It should include all HCP who are assigned responsibility for handling linen across the continuum of use.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/hicpac/recommendations/core-practices.html>

2. At what interval is training provided? (select all that apply)

Upon hire	Whenever lapses are observed	Unknown
Annually	In response to outbreaks	Not assessed
Whenever new processes or products are implemented	No training provided	Other (specify):

“Require training before individuals are allowed to perform their duties and at least annually as a refresher.

Provide additional training in response to recognized lapses in adherence and to address newly recognized infection transmission threats (e.g., introduction of new equipment or procedures).”

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/hicpac/recommendations/core-practices.html>

Healthcare textile quality assurance

3. Does the facility have healthcare textile quality assurance measures that are routinely monitored?

Yes No Unknown Not Assessed

3a. What quality assurance measures are monitored? (i.e., arrives in visibly soiled carts, or that has not been maintained covered during transport)? Specify:

3b. Does the healthcare facility have a process to reject laundered textiles that do not meet quality assurance measures (i.e., arrives in visibly soiled carts, or that has not been maintained covered during transport)?

Yes No Unknown Not Assessed

If **YES**:

3c. Does the healthcare facility monitor the amount of laundered textiles that are rejected?

Yes No Unknown Not Assessed

CDC does not recommend specific healthcare textile quality measures, nor specific rejection criteria. The facility should work with their laundry provider to determine quality measures that may cause inadvertent contamination of laundered textiles. For example, facilities may reject laundered textiles that are received with torn or insufficient packaging, or in transport carts that are visibly soiled.

4. Does someone from the Infection Prevention Department conduct visual observations of laundry processing areas for:

4a. Handling of soiled textiles according to facility policy

Yes No Unknown Not Assessed

4b. Use of PPE by personnel handling soiled healthcare textiles
Yes No Unknown Not Assessed

4c. Cleanliness of loading docks when laundered textiles are received
Yes No Unknown Not Assessed

4d. Cleanliness of healthcare textile staging areas
Yes No Unknown Not Assessed

4e. Measures taken to prevent cleaned textiles from environmental contamination (i.e., cleaned textiles are maintained covered until used)
Yes No Unknown Not Assessed

4f. At what interval are visual observations conducted? (select the best response)
Weekly Not assessed
Monthly Unknown
No scheduled inspection Other (specify): _____

“Monitor adherence to infection prevention practices and infection control requirements.”
Visual inspections may help ensure that processes are conducted safely, according to facility policies.
Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/hicpac/recommendations/core-practices.html>

5. Are healthcare laundry quality measures reviewed in facility infection prevention or other quality assurance committees?
Yes No Unknown Not Assessed

Quality measures should be used to evaluate the effectiveness of policies, procedures, and processes and to inform performance improvement initiative

Notes

Part C. Observations of the laundry area

If laundry is performed onsite, collect these observations in the area where laundry is performed.

If laundry is performed offsite, collect these observations in the applicable areas of the facility (e.g., soiled laundry storage on units, soiled laundry transport area on dock, clean textile receiving area on dock, laundered textile staging area).

Observation 1

1. PPE is available and used by personnel sorting soiled laundry.

Yes

No

Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff

Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff

Personnel that sort soiled laundry should anticipate exposure to heavily soiled textiles and sharps. PPE should include impervious gowns and puncture resistant gloves. Sorting may result in dispersal of contaminants and eye protection and masks may also be needed.

2. Hand cleaning stations are available in the soiled area of the laundry area.

Yes

No

Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff

Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff

Ensure that laundry areas have handwashing facilities and products. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer or soap and water should be readily accessible.

3. Hand cleaning stations are available in the clean area of the laundry area.

Yes

No

Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff

Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff

Ensure that laundry areas have handwashing facilities and products. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer or soap and water should be readily accessible.

4. Laundry areas are free from items belonging to personnel (e.g., purses, bags, food).

Yes

No

Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff

Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff

The soiled laundry area is anticipated to be heavily contaminated, while the clean laundry area should be maintained in a manner that prevents environmental contamination of processed healthcare textiles. The area should be free from the personal belongings of healthcare personnel.

5. Soiled healthcare textiles are bagged or otherwise contained at the point of use.

Yes

No

Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff

Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff

Used linens should be handled in a manner that avoids contamination of the environment and healthcare personnel clothing. They should not be shaken, sorted, or prerinsed at the point of use.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/environmental/index.html#g>

Notes

6. Soiled laundry carts are held in areas designated for soiled supplies until transport to the laundry facility/area.

- Yes
- No
- Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff
- Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff

Soiled laundry carts may be held near the loading dock and should be maintained in an area physically separate from clean supplies.

7. **If offsite laundry is performed:** The loading dock is clean and free from litter or evidence of infestations by birds or vermin.

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable (healthcare textiles are not processed offsite)
- Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff
- Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff

Heavy soiling at the receiving dock has been associated with outbreaks of fungal diseases associated with laundered healthcare textiles.

8. **If offsite laundry is performed:** Cleaned laundry that has been transported to the facility is packaged in a manner that prevents contact with the environment (e.g., impervious covers)

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable (healthcare textiles are not processed offsite)
- Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff
- Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff

Clean healthcare textiles should be packaged and transported in a manner that will ensure their cleanliness and protect them from dust and soil during interfacility loading, transport, and unloading.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/environmental/index.html#g>

9. Carts used to transport, or store cleaned textiles are free from visible soil.

- Yes
- No
- Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff
- Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff

10. The clean textile staging area is free from dust, lint, or signs of water intrusion

- Yes
- No
- Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff
- Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff

Dust, lint, and water intrusion in the clean textile staging area has been associated with outbreaks of fungal infections associated with laundered textiles.

11. Laundered healthcare textiles are maintained in a manner that protects them from the environment (e.g., covered) during storage on patient/resident units.

- Yes
- No
- Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff
- Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff

Notes