



2012

# Codes of Practice for Public Healthcare Operated Laundries and Linen Services.

This document is to be reviewed annually  
at the Australian National Launtex Laundry  
Conference.

8/27/2012

# Codes of Practice for Public Healthcare Operated

## Laundries and Linen Services

2012

The Australian Public Healthcare facilities are provided with laundry and linen services from on-site laundries, public healthcare operated facilities and private commercial laundries. The Australian Standards for Laundry Practices (AS 4146 1994 & 2000) has been the primary reference source to identify acceptable levels of service and compliance. As this standard has not been updated, and has a low likelihood of being updated, key Australian public healthcare operated laundry and linen service management have created these codes of practice to provide an up to date reference guide for healthcare organizations.

Healthcare operated Laundries and Linen Services have a unique understanding and responsibility in terms of their ownership and operating structure. As public healthcare owned businesses there is an empathy and awareness of required standards and outcomes, particularly the Equip standards, matched with the business models that meet the respective healthcare group goals.

The codes of practice include the requirements for hospital, institutional and on premises laundries as well as the minimum performance requirements in order to provide acceptable levels of service and compliance. It is intended to provide Healthcare Operated Laundries, Linen Services and their customers with a common reference for acceptable laundry performance. The standards refer to “required outcomes” whereas compliance requirements are examples of methods to achieve these required outcomes. In addition, these compliance requirements are not intended to eliminate development of new initiatives which may also achieve the required outcomes.

Various references are made to a documented and audited process being available. This ensures that compliance can be illustrated to customers. If compliance with these codes is to be claimed, the laundry shall have a management system in place which includes the implementation of appropriate inspection programs to ensure that the requirements specified are maintained and records shall be kept to demonstrate that regular inspections have been conducted. The checklist attached provides a reference point to determine the level of compliance. Compliance measurement can be undertaken either internally (only up to Some Compliance grading) or through an external source to illustrate greater compliance.

Within the codes of practice there are many references to clauses within AS/NZS 4146:2000. This is necessary as this is the most up to date information available to meet the testing or compliance requirements. Therefore, this document should be read in conjunction with the standard. AS/NZS 4146:2000 Section 3 highlights the minimum requirements for laundering including disinfection while Appendix A includes necessary informative detail required to operate a laundry operation.

The requirements are listed under the following sections;

**1. Facilities**

- i. Buildings
- ii. Equipment

**2. Management systems**

- i. Human Resources management
- ii. Quality Management
- iii. OH&S
- iv. Risk Management

**3. Operations**

- i. Transport
- ii. Storage at plant
- iii. Washing
- iv. Processing
- v. Infection Control
- vi. Distribution

**4. Customer Relations**

- i. Customer requirements and feedback.

**5. Compliance Checklist**

## SECTION 1 Facilities

### 1 (i) Buildings

The laundry buildings shall comply with all the relevant regulatory authority building regulations.

The laundry should include the following:

- (a) The building should be of adequate size to hold the required equipment, services and systems, and provide a safe comfortable working environment for staff. Clearly defined walkways must be identified for safe access around the building and equipment.
- (b) All floors, particularly in the soiled linen area, should be slip resistant and constructed so that they can be maintained in a sound condition, with no broken surfaces to impede the mobility of trolleys as well as allowing for easy cleaning. A documented and audited cleaning process must be available for inspection.
- (c) All walls, ceilings and exposed pipe work should be constructed so that they can be maintained in a sound condition, and kept clean and free from lint, dust and dirt. A documented and audited cleaning process must be available for inspection.
- (d) The premises, fittings and equipment should be designed and constructed in such a manner that harboring or providing access for vermin is prevented. A documented and audited pest control process must be available for inspection.
- (e) Where possible, natural lighting should be utilized. This will reduce power costs and carbon emissions. Lighting intensity in the different laundry work areas should conform to local statutory regulations. Adequate lighting must allow clear identification of stains for quality control.
- (f) The size of water, electrical and energy (e.g. gas, steam) lines should be according to the local statutory regulations for laundry equipment.
- (g) Taking into consideration chemical concentrations and temperatures, the effluent discharge lines and holding pits should be designed to meet the local statutory regulations. Water authority parameters and test results must be available for inspection.
- (h) Drain outlets carrying effluent from washing machines should be sealed (close piped) into the disposal system. If a washing machine drains into an open sump, this should where practical, be covered to prevent the spread of organisms by aerosol when the water is dumped from the machine. This also aids in minimizing the potential chemical hazard from splashing.
- (i) Laundries should be designed to prevent cleaned linen from being contaminated by soiled linen or other matter present in the laundry (including within equipment). This may be achieved by –
  - 1) An appropriate barrier, e.g. a space barrier where the storage areas for soiled linen is positioned well away (at least 2m) from cleaned linen areas (ideally, soiled and cleaned linen areas should be separated by a physical barrier or clearly identified);
  - 2) Mechanical ventilation that is adequate to minimize air contamination and to prevent contamination from dirty to clean areas (airflow should be from clean to dirty areas in all circumstances including prevailing wind conditions).

- (j) Providing adequate washroom and outer garment change facilities at appropriate locations i.e. to be used when moving between soiled linen and clean linen areas, in order to ensure correct infection control practices are followed. Adequate hand washing and drying, toilet, change room and showering facilities are to be provided for all employees. The use of alcohol hand wash pumps is highly recommended.
- (k) Fly screens or high voltage illuminated insect traps must be provided in the sorting, soiled and cleaned linen storage areas.

## **1 (ii) Equipment**

- (a) Equipment and systems should be ergonomically designed to reduce the risk of injury, to optimize employee comfort and to provide pleasant working conditions particularly with respect to odours, noise, lighting, heating, cooling, standing, sitting, stretching, bending and lifting. Compliant Plant risk assessments must be undertaken and available for inspection.
- (b) Equipment must be maintained to ensure compliance with the quality and hygiene requirements detailed throughout this document.
- (c) Operating manuals must be available for each piece of equipment in use.
- (d) Mobile Trolleys should-
  - 1) Be of a design that enables easy cleaning; and
  - 2) Be regularly cleaned and serviced to ensure that wheels are free to rotate (i.e. free from string and other impediments). A documented audited process must be available for inspection.
  - 3) Other linen conveyance means within the laundry plant (e.g. sorting bins, conveyor belts) are to be designed to enable easy cleaning, and be regularly cleaned and maintained in good working order. A documented audited process must be available for inspection.

## **SECTION 2 Management systems**

### **2 (i) Human Resources Systems** (Documents illustrating the following must be available)

- a) Supervisors and key staff are fully trained in appropriate laundry skills and technology. National Training Board qualifications are preferred.
- b) Those skills are maintained by ongoing training and supervision.
- c) All staff are trained in hand washing techniques.
- d) Employees are adequately trained in safe working procedures including safe chemical handling by qualified personnel and have been informed of any hazard to health and safety which may be associated with the work they are required to perform;

- e) Staff employment process complies with relevant Industrial Relations requirements.
- f) Proper job descriptions are provided to all employees.
- g) A documented orientation system for all new staff is in place.
- h) A regular performance review is undertaken to determine staff competency and identify training needs.
- i) Staff training records illustrating ongoing training programs are maintained.

## **2 (ii) Quality Management**

- a) Suitably trained persons must make annual inspections of the laundry to ensure that the requirements of this code are being maintained. Records of inspection against the checklist attached must be available for inspection.
- b) A third party certified quality management system must be in place. E.g. ISO, Equip.
- c) As a matter of good laundry practice, the laundry shall have ongoing audited programs that record and monitor all key laundry processes and defined indicators. The programs shall include clear procedures for-
  - 1) Achieving and maintaining effective washing, disinfection, drying, finishing as well as appropriate product life; and
  - 2) Preventative maintenance systems that ensure correct and safe operation of all plant and equipment including appropriate calibration of all key equipment such as water level controls, temperature controls, and other process timer controls that ensures compliance and process stability.
  - 3) All processes must be available for inspection.

## **2(iii) OH&S**

- (a) Safe and healthy working conditions and an acceptable working environment must be provided for employees.
- (b) Only appropriately trained personnel should handle and store chemicals.
- (c) The following routine cleaning programs must be documented, audited and available for inspection;
  - 1) A cleaning program appropriate for each work area and rest area including associated furniture and equipment.
  - 2) A schedule for cleaning overhead and hard to reach areas.
  - 3) A pest control program.

- (d) The consumption of food and drink is confined to the appropriate areas. No alcohol can be consumed while working.
- (e) An OH&S Committee must be in place which complies with the requirements of the most current OH&S Act. Minutes must be available for inspection
- (f) In conjunction with the requirements of the relevant State and National Industrial, Health, Safety and Welfare Acts, the management is required to-
  - 1) Maintain machines, plant and equipment in a safe, reliable condition;
  - 2) Maintain workplaces which are tidy, clean and safe to enter, work in and leave;
- (g) Employees are to be appropriately advised of their legal responsibilities.
- (h) Adequate medical, health and first aid services must be provided to employees.
- (i) Vaccination against Hepatitis A&B must be made available to all employees handling soiled linen, including post vaccination testing. A register of vaccination must be available for inspection.
- (j) Occupational exposure to noise, vibration and harmful substances must be maintained within acceptable limits prescribed in State, Territory and Commonwealth regulations; a documented and audited process of compliance must be available for inspection.
- (k) Investigate and take appropriate action to eliminate or minimize any health or safety risk to employees, contractors and visitors. A documented and audited hazard identification process must be available for inspection.
- (l) An incident and hazard reporting system must be in place to record and investigate any accidents at work and appropriate action taken in order to prevent the likelihood of any recurrence. A documented and audited system must be available for inspection.
- (m) Laundry Bags should be made in accordance with the AS 3789 series, but must-
  - 1) Be made from material that is fit for the purpose intended;
  - 2) Be sound and free from defects such as holes or tears; and
  - 3) Have a suitable closure system to ensure items are secure within the bag.
- (n) To facilitate proper closure as well as safe and comfortable handling, laundry bags should not be overfilled.
- (o) Any linen that has been soiled with cyto toxic waste must be placed in a plastic purple colored cyto toxic bag by customers and placed within a soiled linen bag. A documented system must be in place for the management of cyto toxic waste that ensures the correct identification and laundering of the linen without being directly handled.

## **2(iv) Risk Management**

- a) A documented and audited equipment cleaning and maintenance program must be in place to ensure that the requirements of this code (e.g. the wash program and ironing temperatures) are consistently met.
- b) In order to minimize the risk of fire a regular overhead cleaning program must be in place to reduce lint build up. The cleaning program must be documented and records made available for inspection.
- c) A proper Risk Register is maintained which complies with the Healthcare Group requirements or the Australian standard.
- d) A business continuation contingency plan must to prepared and available for inspection.

## **SECTION 3 OPERATIONS**

### **3 (i) Transport**

- a) Transport vehicles used for transporting linen should be designed in such a way that loads may be safely and easily handled. Where soiled linen is handled in a mobile trolley, the unloading and loading operation should be carried out on a flat, level surface.
- b) Transport vehicles maintenance records must be available for inspection.
- c) In order to reduce manual handling, trolleys should be used to deliver clean linen to customers. Soiled linen and cleaned linen can be transported in the same trolleys, bins, bags or other transport if they have been thoroughly cleaned and dried after carrying soiled linen and before being used for transporting cleaned linen. A microbiological indicator test system must be in place to check the cleaning of this equipment. A documented and audited system must be available for inspection.
- d) Where loading docks with raised platforms are not available, transport vehicles must have a tailgate device in order to safely unload and load linen.
- (c) The vehicles which transport linen to and from the laundry plant must have a documented and audited cleaning and sanitizing program. Soiled and clean textiles must be separated by a suitable barrier in transport. The barrier may be defined by such means as compartments, containers with suitable closures, moisture impermeable bags or one or more suitable barrier products that would prevent contact and contamination between the soiled and clean linen. If a compartment has carried soiled laundry, that compartment should be thoroughly sanitized before it is used to carry clean linen.



- (d) Where linen is handled in mobile trolleys, the transport vehicle should be provided with means to secure the trolleys firmly inside the vehicle. (This can be achieved with nylon webbing straps fixed to appropriate anchorages, wheel wedges, chains or lock bars.) Where the transport vehicle has a tailgate platform, restraints must be provided to prevent the trolleys rolling off the tailgate platform e.g. side protection barriers, wheel locking flaps.

### **3 (ii) Storage at plant**

- (a) Soiled linen when unloaded must be stored in an area separated by an appropriate space or physical barrier, from that where cleaned linen is stored or dispatched. (See Clause 1(i) (i)1) Soiled linen shall be processed for washing as soon as it is practicable to minimize delays between delivery and laundering. The storage of soiled linen for prolonged periods is undesirable not because of any risk of disease transmission but because of concerns relating to stain removal, mildew growth and laundry aesthetics.
- (b) Linen which is soiled with contaminants such as fats or oils must not be stored for any length of time as there is a hazard of spontaneous combustion. Written processes highlighting this must be available for inspection.

### **3 (iii) Washing**

- (a) Sorting of soiled linen for washing is dependent on the individual requirements of the laundry facility. The main objectives of sorting are; (i) to enable identification and counting necessary for efficient production, (ii) to achieve the correct washing of various types of textiles (Information on the care labeling of textiles is given in AS/NZS 1957), (iii) to establish the degree of soiling, for effective stain removal. (Some methods of stain removal are given in Appendix B of AS/NZS 4146:2000.)
- (b) The following performance indicators are the common methods to assess the suitability and effectiveness of the wash process. A good partnership with the laundry chemical supplier is required in order to maintain effective conformance.
- (c) The measurement Performance indicators after a single wash using an EMPA swatch must be undertaken at least quarterly to measure;
- 1) Degree of whiteness, intrinsic greying and intrinsic yellowing. When tested in accordance with Appendix C of AS/NZS 4146:2000
  - 2) Increase in the degree of whiteness of an unsoiled fabric due to a single wash-and-dry cycle shall be greater than 10 for each wash formula used in the laundry;
  - 3) Intrinsic greying (greying measured in the absence of ultraviolet radiation) of an unsoiled fabric due to a single wash-and-dry cycle shall be less than 2 for each wash formula used in the laundry;
  - 4) Intrinsic yellowing (yellowing measured in the absence of ultraviolet radiation) of an unsoiled fabric due to a single wash-and-dry cycle shall be less than 2 for each wash formula used in the laundry; and
  - 5) Percentage soil removal after a single wash-and-dry cycle shall be –

- (a) greater than 28% for the test panel soiled with artificial carbon black and mineral oil; NOTE Removal of carbon black and mineral oil indicates the efficiency of the detergent and mechanical action.
  - (b) greater than 90%, where bloodstains are expected, or greater than 50%, where bloodstains are not commonly expected, for the test panel soiled with artificial blood;
  - (c) greater than 22% (whether bleach is used or not) for the test panel artificially soiled with milk chocolate; NOTE: removal of milk chocolate indicates the ability of the wash process to remove protein pigment soil.
  - (d) For the test panel soiled with artificial red wine-
    - (A) Be less than 50% where bleach was used and greater than 20% where bleach was not used, for lightly soiled linen (e.g. linen from hotels and motels); or
    - (B) Be less than 90% where bleach was used and greater than 50% where bleach was not used, for heavily soiled linen (e.g. white industrial garments, linen from hospitals and nursing homes) NOTE: removal of red wine indicates the effectiveness of the bleach used in the wash process
- (d) The measurement Performance indicators after multiple washes are noted below;
- 1) *Degree of whiteness, intrinsic greying and intrinsic yellowing* when tested in accordance with AS 4146:2000.
    - Increase in the degree of whiteness of an unsoiled fabric due to 50 wash-and-dry cycles shall be greater than 10 for each wash formula used in the laundry;
    - (a) Intrinsic greying (greying measured in the absence of ultraviolet radiation) of an unsoiled fabric due to 50 wash-and-dry cycles shall be less than 3 for each wash formula used in the laundry; and
    - (b) Intrinsic yellowing (yellowing measured in the absence of ultraviolet radiation) of an unsoiled fabric due to 50 wash-and-dry cycles shall be less than 3 for each wash formula used in the laundry.
- (e) Total wear
- (1) When tested in accordance with AS 4146:2000, the overall decrease in breaking force (total wear) due to 50 wash-and-dry cycles shall be less than 25% for each wash formula used in the laundry. Appendix F specifies a method for determining chemical wear.

1. For the purposes of guidance (with respect to wear and linen meeting the relevant Australian Standards), if the decrease in total wear is-
    - a) Less than 10%                      the laundry procedure is excellent;
    - b) 10%-15%                            the laundry procedure is very good;
    - c) 15%-20%                            the laundry procedure is good;
    - d) 20%-25%                            the laundry procedure is acceptable; and
    - e) More than 25%                      the laundry procedure is unacceptable.
  
  2. It is recommended that when tested in accordance with Appendix F the decrease in breaking force caused by chemical degradation (chemical wear) due to 50 wash-and-dry cycles should be less than 13%.
  
  3. Since, under test conditions-
 

Total wear = chemical wear + mechanical wear;

Mechanical wear may be determine by the difference between total wear (as determined in Appendix E) and chemical wear ( as determined in Appendix F), i.e. Mechanical wear = total wear – chemical wear.
  
  4. The relationship in Note 3 applies *only* to cotton fabrics. Accordingly, it is to be noted that for blended fabrics (e.g. polyester/cotton) the breaking force (total wear) will *not* be significantly reduced after subjecting the fabric to laundering because only the cotton component would be chemically degraded. However, the moisture absorption and abrasiveness and hence the comfort factor of the fabric *would* be considerably diminished.
  
  5. To assess the consistency of wear during the wash-and-dry cycles, it is desirable to know the total wear after only 25 wash-and-dry cycles. Accordingly, it is suggested that the number of test specimens be doubled (i.e. increased to six) and that one half (i.e. three) of the test specimens be withdrawn and tested after 25 wash-and-dry cycles whilst the other half (i.e. the other three) be subjected to the full 50 wash-and-dry cycles before being tested. The total wear results for the 25 wash-and-dry cycles should be approximately *half* (i.e.50%) of that obtained for the 50 wash-and-dry cycles. A variation of more than 10% (i.e. a result of less than 40% or more than 60%) indicates an *inconsistency* in the wear within the first 25 cycles or within the second 25 cycles.
  
  6. If any of the test specimens have to be stored (e.g. overnight in order to complete the appropriate number of wash-and-dry cycles or await the completion of the second half of the test specimens so that the test specimens after 25 and 50 wash-and-dry cycles, say, can be forwarded together to the test laboratory) they are to be stored in a completely *dry* condition. Storage of the test specimens in a wet condition (e.g. in a plastic bag) may affect the total wear results because the test specimens may be damaged by mildew.
- (f) Incineration residue (ash)

When tested in accordance with Appendix G, the increase in incineration residue (ash) of an unsoiled fabric due to 50 wash-and-dry cycles shall be less than 1%.

- (g) Wool blankets that Comply with AS 3789.4 shall be laundered in accordance with AS 3789.5. If they Do *not* comply with AS 3789.4 they shall be laundered in accordance with the wash formulae specified in Paragraph H3 of Appendix H of AS/NZS 4146:2000.
- (h) Sheepskins shall be laundered in accordance with Paragraph H4 of Appendix H of AS/NZS 4146:2000.
- (i) According to AS/NZS 4146:2000 disinfection can be achieved by thermal or chemical means. Compliance with the requirements of AS/NZS 4146:2000 clause 3.5.1, 3.5.2 and 3.5.3 must be achieved. Options such as linen pathology testing using AGAR method or Hygiene check swabs must be used. A documented process illustrating compliance must be available for inspection.
- (j) Records of wash programs shall be kept for each wash formula used. Each wash formula shall clearly specify details of –
  - (a) The type of linen intended to be washed;
  - (b) The maximum wash load;
  - (c) The wash program or process including-
    - (i) The type of operation (e.g. break-wash, suds, rinse);
    - (ii) The duration of each operation
    - (iii) The water level (dip);
    - (iv) The water temperature;
    - (v) The chemicals and their dosage;
    - (vi) Any other relevant information.

### **3 (iv) Processing**

NOTE: Appendix A of AS/NZS 4146:2000 provides information about general laundering considerations, while Appendix B provides a guide to stain removal.

- a) Laundries should adopt rigorous documented inspection procedures to ensure that cleaned operating theatre linen has no stains or holes. Particular attention should be given to procedures which minimize the problem of linting and static electricity. (See AS 1169 for information on the nature of the hazards arising from the medical use of flammable anesthetic agents and the installation of antistatic flooring.)

All linen must be purchased to the specifications of AS 3789 series in order to ensure products do not shrink, pill or discolor.. Evidence showing compliance with specifications must be available for inspection”

### **3 (v) Infection Control**

- a) The laundry manager must have appropriate knowledge of the potential infectious hazards of soiled linen.
- b) Regular information and education must be provided to laundry staff about potential infectious hazards and techniques to prevent the spread of micro-organisms in the environment to finished linen and to themselves, as well as safe and appropriate handling procedures for soiled and clean linen.
- c) Instruction must be given to laundry staff that they are to report all infections such as gastroenteritis, dermatitis, pustules, skin lesions and boils and seek immediate medical attention.
- d) Provision to laundry staff of sufficient quantities of appropriate protective clothing ie gloves that are comfortable and prevent fluid penetration and long sleeve gowns that prevent fluid penetration on the arms and between the chest and knees, to be worn whilst handling soiled linen.
- e) Instruction to be given to staff in personal hygiene, particularly the need for hand washing after handling soiled linen or removal of protective clothing.
- f) Alcohol based hand cleaners should be placed in all areas to encourage regular hand cleaning by all staff.
- g) Staff movement from areas where soiled linen is handled to areas where cleaned linen is processed should be minimized. If this movement is necessary, staff must be instructed to change their outer protective clothing (e.g. gowns or aprons and gloves) and thoroughly wash their hands before touching cleaned linen. Ideally, a transit zone should be provided and identified between dirty and clean areas of the laundry, where hand washing or cleaning using hygiene hand cleaner is carried out as a routine procedure, and facilities are available to change outer garments. Whenever staff leave the soiled area of the laundry to go home or for meal breaks they should be instructed to remove outer protective garments and to thoroughly wash their hands. (Facilities must be available for staff working in soiled areas to shower before going home.)
- h) Bags containing soiled linen should be handled carefully to avoid damage and the release of possible contaminated aerosols into the air.

### **3 (vi) Distribution**

- (a) Cleaned linen should be stored in a clean, dry place in a manner that –

1. Is distinctly separated from soiled linen;
  2. Prevents contamination (e.g. by aerosols, dust, moisture and vermin); and
  3. Allows stock rotation, so that the oldest stock may be used first.
- (b) Laundered linen should be stored on clean shelves and, if necessary, wrapped in a protective covering.
- (c) Depending on the size of the delivery and the nature of the items to be delivered, cleaned linen which is to be returned to the client should be packed (either loose or tied in bundles) into –
- (a) Clean trolleys, bins, baskets and covered to prevent soiling; or
  - (b) Clean bags and securely fastened.
  - (c) The stacking or hanging of certain items of cleaned, covered linen directly into a clean compartment of a transport vehicle is also permissible.

## **SECTION 4 CUSTOMER RELATIONS**

### **4 (i) Customer requirements and feedback**

- a) Preparation of soiled linen for collection. The launderer shall advise the customer that linen which is to be collected shall comply with the following:
- 1) In addition to being placed in suitable laundry bags, linen which is heavily soiled with blood or other body fluids, or other fluids which could leak and further contaminate other linen, shall be also contained within suitable impermeable bags e.g. plastic, which are to be securely closed.
  - 2) Particular attention shall be given to soiled coloured linen which could cause dye transfer.
  - 3) AS4146:2000 states that The Chief Health Officer, Quarantine Officer or Medical Officer in each State, Territory, Country or area must be consulted if linen soiled by quarantinable diseases (e.g. Plague, haemorrhagic fevers i.e. Lassa, Marburg, Ebola and Congo-Crimean), is inadvertently collected. Such linen may need to be burnt and should *not* be handled by laundry operators prior to approval being obtained from the appropriate officer.
  - 4) The linen shall be free from foreign matter such as sharp objects (e.g. hospital sharps, cutlery and glass), metal objects, food remnants and paper products. A method of identification and reporting must be introduced in order to work with customers to reduce the incidence of sharps and other non-conforming items being received by the laundry.

- 5) Linen such as personal items, garments and flatwork, not contaminated with blood or other body fluids may be segregated into categories, placed into suitable laundry bags and securely closed.
- 6) Any linen that has been soiled with cyto toxic waste must be placed in a plastic purple colored cyto toxic bag and placed within a soiled linen bag. This linen must be washed without being directly handled.
- 7) There must be a safe means of unloading and loading linen and or trolleys at the customer site e.g. loading dock, level ground, leveling platform.
- 8) To facilitate proper closure as well as safe and comfortable handling, the laundry bags should not be overfilled.
- 9) A detailed process must be documented for work undertaken within a healthcare facility e.g. distribution. The processes must include all relevant healthcare facility standards for police checks, occupational Health and safety and infection control.

### **SECTION 5 Compliance Checklist**

Compliance can be measured under the ACHS Equip evaluation method. (See Equip version 5 Book 1 p 23)

|    |                         |
|----|-------------------------|
| LA | low achievement         |
| SA | some achievement        |
| MA | marked achievement      |
| EA | extensive achievement   |
| OA | outstanding achievement |

5 (1). The following items MUST be in place to illustrate any form of compliance with this code of practice.

- 1) The building is of adequate size to hold the required equipment, services and systems, and provides a safe comfortable working environment for staff. Clearly defined walkways are identified for access around the building and equipment.
- 2) All floors, particularly in the soiled linen area, are slip resistant and constructed so that they can be maintained in a sound condition, with no broken surfaces to impede the

- mobility of trolleys as well as allowing for easy cleaning. A documented and audited cleaning process is available for inspection.
- 3) All walls, ceilings and exposed pipe work are constructed so that they can be maintained in a sound condition, and kept clean and free from lint, dust and dirt. A documented and audited cleaning process is available for inspection.
  - 4) The premises, fittings and equipment are designed and constructed in such a manner that harboring or providing access for vermin is prevented. A documented and audited pest control process is available for inspection.
  - 5) Water authority acceptable parameters for effluent are defined and test results are available for inspection.
  - 6) Drain outlets carrying effluent from washing machines are sealed (close piped) into the disposal system. If a washing machine drains into an open sump, it is where practicable covered, to prevent the spread of organisms by aerosol when the water is dumped from the machine and to minimize the potential chemical hazard from splashing.
  - 7) The laundry is designed to prevent cleaned linen from being contaminated by soiled linen or other matter present in the laundry. e.g. An appropriate barrier (2m separation) is provided, and/or adequate mechanical ventilation is provided to minimize the risk of cross contamination.
  - 8) Adequate washroom and outer garment change facilities at appropriate locations is provided
  - 9) Compliant Plant risk assessments are undertaken and available for inspection.
  - 10) Fly screens or high voltage illuminated insect traps are provided in the sorting, soiled and cleaned linen storage areas.
  - 11) Mobile Trolleys are regularly cleaned and serviced to ensure that wheels are free to rotate.
  - 12) Other linen conveyance means within the laundry plant (e.g. sorting bins, conveyor belts) are designed to enable easy cleaning, and are regularly cleaned and maintained in good working order. A documented audited process is available for inspection.
  - 13) Supervisors and key staff are fully trained in appropriate laundry skills and technology.
  - 14) All staff have been trained in hand washing techniques.
  - 15) Adequate instruction and training of employees in safe working procedures including safe chemical handling by qualified personnel has been provided, and staff have been informed of any hazard to health and safety which may be associated with the work they are required to perform;
  - 16) Staff employment process complies with relevant Industrial relations requirements.
  - 17) Proper job descriptions have been given to all employees.
  - 18) A documented orientation system for all new staff is in place.
  - 19) Staff training records illustrating ongoing training programs are kept.
  - 20) Suitably trained persons make regular inspections of the laundry to ensure that the requirements of this code are being maintained.
  - 21) The laundry has ongoing audited programs that record and monitor all key laundry processes and defined indicators e.g. temperature compliance.



- 22) Preventative maintenance systems that ensure correct and safe operation of all plant and equipment including appropriate calibration of all key equipment is in place, and records of such systems is available for inspection.
- 23) Routine cleaning programs are documented, audited and available for inspection including a cleaning program appropriate for each work area and rest area.
- 24) A schedule for cleaning overhead and hard to reach areas, and a pest control program are in place and available for inspection.
- 25) The consumption of food and drink is confined to the appropriate areas, and no alcohol is permitted to be consumed while working.
- 26) An OH&S Committee is in place which complies with the requirements of the most current OH&S Act. Minutes of meetings are available for inspection.
- 27) Adequate medical, health and first aid services are provided.
- 28) Vaccination against Hepatitis A& B is available to all employees handling soiled linen, including post vaccination testing. A register of vaccination records is available for inspection.
- 29) Testing to report on occupational exposure to noise and vibration is undertaken as required under the relevant OH&S Act.
- 30) An incident and hazard reporting system is in place to record and investigate any accidents at work and appropriate action in order to prevent the likelihood of any recurrence is also in place. A documented and audited system is available for inspection.
- 31) A documented and audited equipment cleaning and maintenance program is in place to ensure that the requirements of this code (e.g. the wash program and ironing temperatures) are consistently met.
- 32) In order to minimize the risk of fire a documented and audited overhead cleaning program is undertaken and information regarding this program is available for inspection.
- 33) Where soiled linen and cleaned linen are transported in the same trolleys, bins, bags or other transport they have been thoroughly cleaned and dried after carrying soiled linen and before being used for transporting cleaned linen.
- 34) Where loading docks with raised platforms are not available, transport vehicles have a tailgate device in order to safely unload and load linen.
- 35) The vehicles which transport linen to and from the laundry plant have a documented and audited cleaning and sanitizing program. Soiled and clean textiles are separated by a suitable barrier in transport.
- 36) Where linen is handled in mobile trolleys, the transport vehicle is provided with appropriate means to secure the trolleys firmly inside the vehicle.
- 37) Soiled linen when unloaded is stored in an area separated by an appropriate space (at least 2m) from that where cleaned linen is stored or dispatched.
- 38) Linen which is soiled with contaminants such as fats or oils is stored for as short a time as possible to minimize the hazard of spontaneous combustion. Written processes highlighting this policy are available for inspection.

- 39) Performance indicators after a single wash using an EMPA swatch or similar product are undertaken at least quarterly to measure wash performance.
- 40) Compliance with AS/NZS 4146:2000 clause 3.5.1, 3.5.2 and 3.5.3 regarding thermal and chemical disinfection is achieved, and evidence of compliance is available for inspection.
- 41) Records of wash programs are kept for each wash formula used.
- 42) A rigorous documented inspection procedure is in place, to ensure that cleaned operating theatre linen has no stains or holes.
- 43) All linen purchased requires compliance with the specifications of AS 3789 series in order to ensure products do not shrink, pill or discolor.
- 44) The laundry manager possesses appropriate knowledge of the potential infectious hazards of soiled linen.
- 45) Regular information and education is provided to laundry staff about potential infectious hazards and techniques to prevent the spread of micro-organisms in the environment to finished linen and to themselves, as well as safe and appropriate handling procedures for soiled and clean linen.
- 46) Laundry staff are instructed that they are to report all personal infections such as gastroenteritis, dermatitis, pustules, skin lesions and boils and seek immediate medical attention.
- 47) Laundry staff are provided with sufficient quantities of appropriate protective clothing i.e. gloves that are comfortable and prevent fluid penetration and long sleeve gowns that prevent fluid penetration on the arms and between the chest and knees, and protective garments provided are worn whilst handling soiled linen.
- 48) Staff have been instructed in personal hygiene, particularly the need for hand washing after handling soiled linen or removal of protective clothing.
- 49) A transit zone is provided and identified between dirty and clean areas of the laundry, where hand washing or cleaning using hygiene hand cleaner is carried out as a routine procedure, and facilities are available to change outer garments.
- 50) Cleaned linen is stored in a clean, dry place.
- 51) Customers have been instructed that linen which is to be collected shall comply with the requirements of 4(1)1 of this standard.
- 52) Adequate lighting is provided to allow clear identification of stains for quality control.
- 53) Alcohol hand wash pumps are provided for staff usage in appropriate locations.
- 54) Adequate numbers of staff have obtained National Training Board qualifications.
- 55) A regular performance review is undertaken to determine staff competency and identify training needs.
- 56) A third party certified quality management system is in place. E.g. ISO, Equip.
- 57) A proper Risk Register is maintained which complies with the Healthcare Group requirements or the Australian standard.
- 58) Transport vehicles maintenance records are available for inspection.
- 59) If the transport vehicle has a tailgate platform, restraints are provided to prevent the trolleys rolling off the tailgate platform e.g. side protection barriers, wheel locking flaps.

60) Soiled linen when unloaded is stored in an area separated by a physical barrier from clean linen.

61) A documented system is in place for the management of cyto toxic waste that ensures the correct identification and laundering of the linen without being directly handled.

This checklist provides a reference point to determine the level of compliance. Compliance measurement can be undertaken either internally (only up to “Some Compliance” grading) or through an external source to illustrate greater compliance.

Prepared by:

Bill Crotty      General Manager Warragul Linen Service.  
President Victorian Institutional of Laundries Association.( VILA)  
[gm@wls.com.au](mailto:gm@wls.com.au)

With input from

Ken Draper      Manager, Loddon Linen Service, Bendigo Health.  
Kevin Prasad    Manager, NSW Linen Services.  
Lynette Jones   General Manager, Group Linen Service, Queensland Health.  
G&J Jowsey      Graham Jowsey & Associates Pty. Ltd.