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| **Infection Control and Prevention Policy and Procedure** | **Subject: Safe Handling of Linen** |
| **Issued By**: Housekeeping and Nursing | **Approved By:**  Administrator**:**  DNS**:** |
| **Effective:** | **Revised:** |

**POLICY**

Facility personnel will handle, store and transport linen in a manner that prevents gross microbial contamination of the air and persons handling linens.

**PROCEDURE**

1. When handling linen, whether clean or soiled, staff will utilize standard precautions
   * Staff to utilize gloves when handling soiled linen
2. Soiled laundry and bedding (e.g. personal clothing, uniforms, scrub suits, gowns, bedsheets, blankets, towels, etc.) contaminated with blood or other potentially infectious materials (e.g. vomitus, stool) will be handled as little as possible and with a minimum of agitation.
   * Linen will not be sorted at point of care/resident care area
   * Linen should not be shaken
3. When handling soiled linen, linen should be rolled in a manner to keep the most soiled part inside to prevent contamination of the air, surfaces, and personnel.
4. Contaminated linen will be placed in a leak-proof bag at point of care (e.g. resident’s room)/patient care area and securely tied before transport to dirty linen cart or soiled utility room.
5. Linen, clean or dirty/soiled, will be carried/transported away from the body.
6. Separate carts will be used to transport clean and soiled linen.
   * If the same cart must be used, it will be cleaned and disinfected before transporting clean linen.
7. Clean linen will be stored neatly and in a manner that prevents contamination in the linen closet on each floor/unit for use.
   * Environmental Services/Housekeeping staff will ensure each floor/unit has an adequate supply of linens.
8. Nursing staff may take clean linen from clean linen closet and place on portable linen carts in a manner that prevents contamination
   * Linen should not be touching floor or other surface areas outside of linen cart
   * Linen carts should be covered at all times when not in use
9. If any linen touches the floor or other visibly soiled surface, employee must treat as soiled and place in dirty linen cart or soiled utility room.
10. No items (e.g. lotion, body wash, toilet paper, gloves) should be stored on top of portable linen carts
11. When taking linen to a resident’s room, employee will take only the amount necessary to provide care. Do not take extra linen to resident’s rooms.
    * Do not return linen to clean linen cart once removed.
12. If linen is being taken to the room of a resident but are asked to provide care to a different resident, the staff member will complete the task first for the intended resident before providing care to the other resident.
13. In instances where laundry is done onsite, the facility will ensure that the laundry area is designed to maintain separate areas for receiving and handling used linen and a clean area for processing washed/clean linen.
14. The laundry room will have adequate supplies for hand hygiene and personal protective equipment (PPE).
15. The Director of Environmental Services/Housekeeping or Supervisor will ensure that a sharps container is located in the laundry room. Sharps containers will be replaced when 2/3 full.
16. The Director of Environmental Services/Housekeeping or Supervisor will ensure that forceps/tongs or similar safe sorting devices are available for sorting laundry.

**REFERENCES**

CDC (Updated 3/27/2020). Appendix D – Linen and Laundry Management. <https://www.cdc.gov/hai/prevent/resource-limited/laundry.html>

CDC (11/5/2015). Background G – Laundry and Bedding. <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/environmental/background/laundry.html>

CDC (Updated May 2019). Guidelines for Disinfection and Sterilization in Healthcare Facilities, 2008. <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/pdf/guidelines/disinfection-guidelines-H.pdf>

CDC (Updated 11/10/2021). Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations to Prevent SARS-CoV-2 Spread in Nursing Homes. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/long-term-care.html>