



WACHS- South West Inland and Coastal Laundry Services

Provided by:

- **Bridgetown Hospital**
- **Busselton Health Service**



Inland and Coastal Laundry Services

Effective: 15 July 2019

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1. Guiding Principles

The Australian Standard (AS/NZ) 4146 specifies general laundry practice requirements and recommendations for hospitals as well as minimum performance requirements which are to be attained in order to provide an acceptable level of service.

This document outlines how, in line with Australian Standard (AS/NZ) 4146, laundry collection, processing and the related distribution system is to be performed and documented.

Unwashed linen is to be treated as hazardous because it may be contaminated with infectious material or hazardous objects. Once it has been deposited into the soiled linen receptacle, appropriate personal protective equipment is to be worn before it is handled.

1.1 Goal

To deliver a quality laundry service, guided by Australian Standard (AS/NZ) 4146, which produces clean, hygienic linen in a customer focused and efficient manner.

2. Procedure

2.1 Facilities and Management

2.1.1 Facilities

The Bridgetown and Busselton Hospital's laundry services comply with all relevant regulatory authority requirements. The laundry is designed to prevent cleaned linen from being contaminated by soiled linen or other matter present in the laundry.

This is achieved by:

- appropriate barrier e.g. space barrier where the storage areas for soiled linen is positioned well away from cleaned linen areas
- adequate ventilation to minimize air contamination
- equipment and systems meet the (AS/NZ) 4146 e.g. ergonomically designed to reduce the risk of injury and to optimize employee comfort.

2.1.2 Management

The Bridgetown and Busselton Hospital's laundry services are committed to continuous monitoring and management of appropriate inspection programs that ensure that the Standards are being maintained and records are kept that demonstrate ongoing quality assurance.

This is achieved by:

- the provision of safe and healthy working conditions
- ensuring the supervisor and all laundry staff are fully trained, and ongoing training is maintained. e.g. infection control knowledge, storage of chemicals, handling procedures for soiled and clean linen etc.
- provision of sufficient quantities of appropriate protective clothing to laundry staff which is to be worn while conducting laundry duties
- ensuring that laundry staff are aware of personal hygiene, in particular, the need for hand washing after handling soiled linen or removal of protective clothing
- ensuring that cleaning programs/records are maintained (e.g. the cleaning of each work area including equipment, maintenance program to ensure that requirements of the Australian Standards are met (wash program temperatures), pest control)
- regular maintenance of machines, plant and equipment to ensure safety and reliability
- ensuring that regular safety inspections of the laundry facility is carried out and recorded.

2.2 Laundry Transportation Equipment

2.2.1 The Vehicle is designed to transport linen in such a way that the loads are safely and easily handled..

- Soiled and clean laundry is transported in separate compartments with a suitable barrier provided.
- Linen on mobile trolleys is provided with secured means to fasten to the inside of the vehicle during transportation.
- Vehicle cleaning program is maintained and recorded.
- Appropriate maintenance and up keep of the vehicle is carried out and recorded.
- Vehicle is provided with waterless antibacterial hand cleaner for the purpose of regular hand hygiene.
- Water storage container and liquid soap fitted to the outside of the truck.

2.2.2 Laundry Bags:

- are made from material that is fit for the purpose intended, are sound and free from defects such as holes and tears
- include suitable fasteners or ties for effective closure and safe and comfortable handling
- are not to be overfilled (two-thirds full, to prevent manual handling injuries to staff) received from all hospitals.

2.2.3 Mobile Trolleys:

- are regularly cleaned and serviced to ensure good working order, with wheels free from strings or other debris that may impair their function
- are of the design specific to the purpose.

2.3 Collection, Loading, Storage and Sorting of Linen

2.3.1 Collection / delivery of soiled / clean linen

All items for laundering are to be received in a manner that they can easily be handled by laundry workers without the risk of injury while keeping contamination to a minimum. (See [Appendix 1.](#))

All soiled linen is 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, is also contained within suitable impervious bags which are securely closed.

- The linen received from all hospitals is to be free from foreign matter such as sharp objects, metal objects, food remnants and paper products.
- Soiled linen and cleaned linen is transported in different mobile trolleys, bins, or bags.
- All bags containing soiled linen is handled carefully to avoid damage and the release of possible contaminated aerosols into the air.
- Unloading and storage of soiled linen is to comply with Australian Standards were appropriate.
- Soiled linen when unloaded is stored in an appropriate area from that where cleaned linen is stored or despatched.
- Soiled linen is processed for washing as soon as it is practicable e.g. soon after the arrival at the laundry.
- Protective equipment is provided and is to be worn when handling soiled linen.

2.3.2 Storage and packaging of cleaned linen

- Clean linen is stored in a clean, dry place and is distinctly separated from soiled linen.
- Laundered linen is stored on clean shelves and when necessary, wrapped in protective covering or clean protective bags securely fastened.
- Mobile trolleys used for transportation are clean with protective covers.

2.3.3 Sorting of soiled items at sites

- Sorting linen at hospitals takes place to separate different classes and material compositions of the items for washing. This is to ensure that the items are processed through the best possible program for their type of material and degree of soiling. Personal Protective Equipment is to be worn at all times during this process.

2.4 General Laundering

2.4.1 The Washing of Sorted Items

- Washing is to be carried out using the program best suited to ensure the removal of dirt, grease, oils, body fluids and any bacteria or fungal matter in line with AS/NZ 4146.
- Once the clean, hygienic items are removed from the washing machine they are never to come into contact with any soiled items or receptacles that have been used to transport soiled items unless they have been disinfected thoroughly. The general rule is that separation between clean and soiled linen is to be at a minimum distance of two metres.

2.4.2 Stain Removal

- Although the stains remaining after washing are generally of an unknown composition, experience generally allows launderers to make judgements as to the nature of the stains.
- If the stain cannot be identified / removed, the five step procedure as per the Australian Standards is to be followed.

2.4.3 Drying

- Drying must be started within one hour of washing to prevent the growth of bacteria in the wet washing. If this cannot occur for reasons beyond normal control, the items are to be rewashed as before.

2.4.4 Folding

- Folding is performed to achieve appropriate presentation of the items, during which, a quality check is completed for items that may be damaged, substandard or still soiled and not acceptable for return to the client/clinical area.

2.4.5 Disinfection

- Temperature and duration of the wash cycles and the use of chemicals, other laundry processes (e.g. dilution, agitation, drainage and drying) are effective in reducing or killing viruses and bacteria. Soiled linen is to be washed ensuring that the temperature of the load is maintained at a minimum of 64°C for not less than 10 minutes, or at a minimum of 71°C for not less than three minutes. If the linen is heavily soiled, a flush cycle is to be used before the disinfection cycle.
- Laundry must never be placed on the floor prior to being placed in linen trolleys/bags.
- Linen is to be placed directly into linen trolley/bags.

2.5 Specific Laundering

2.5.1 Woollen Materials

Woollens are laundered in accordance with AS3789.4 and 5.

- Woollens are given an initial warm flush to remove soiling matter, followed by one high temperature wash with detergent.
- The woollens then have two rinses.

2.5.2 Sheepskins

2.5.3

- Sheepskins can be washed and disinfected in an industrial washing machine at temperatures not exceeding 80°C, and dried at temperatures not exceeding 60°C.

2.6 Distribution

2.6.1 Storing

- Stored items are to be kept in an area that is dry, secure and clean with sufficient air flow to prevent bacterial and fungal growth.

2.6.2 Despatching

- Laundry for external and internal clients is to be bagged, wrapped or placed on appropriate mobile trolleys to maintain the integrity of the cleaned linen during transportation.

2.6.3 Distribution

- Items/linen for distribution back to sites is to be completed in line with the Blackwood Regional Laundry Courier schedule and transported such that maintains the integrity of the washed items and is delivered in a professional service that complies with Australian Standard AS 4146.

2.7 Equipment and Environmental Cleaning

2.7.1 Equipment and Surfaces

- Cleaning is to be performed on a routine basis using a standard method. A cleaning schedule, detailing the levels of cleaning for each of the particular areas and equipment in the Laundry facility, is documented / recorded.
- Specific cleaning regimes are required if transmission-based precautions are instituted e.g. an outbreak situation. Advice is to be sought from infection control personnel or policy in these situations.

- Gloves are to be worn when cleaning. If there is a likelihood of splashing during environmental cleaning, a fluid-resistant apron, protective eyewear and face shield are to be worn.
- Periodic cleaning of high areas, ceiling vents and infrequently accessed fixtures is to be completed.

2.7.2 Standard precautions are applied at all times

- Hand hygiene, before and after handling any linen/items.
- The use of personal protective equipment.
- Routine environmental cleaning.
- Appropriate handling of linen.

2.8 Chemicals

All chemicals are automatically dispensed into the machines under a program control. Some industrial chemicals are not to be manually handled because of the risk of injury.

Companies providing chemicals will usually install dispensing equipment and will also provide a monitoring service to check that the wash cycles meet the correct concentration and required temperatures.

2.8.1 Chemical Safety

- Information about products used in the workplace including precautions to be taken and protective equipment necessary for handling the products is to be provided e.g. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS).
- Always wipe up spilt chemicals promptly (Spill Kits available)
- Chemicals are not to be indiscriminately mixed.
- Handling and/or storing of chemicals is only to be carried out by trained personnel.
- Appropriate protective clothing is to be worn when handling chemicals.

2.8.2 Typical chemicals that are used

- Concentrated Surfactant Detergent
- Liquid Oxygen Bleach
- Sour Finishing Agent
- Liquid Fabric Softener Conditioner
- Heavy Duty Alkaline Detergent

2.9 Plant and Equipment

All laundry equipment is to have a preventive maintenance program and is to be checked on a regular basis. This information is to be documented and reported to the Laundry Supervisor at the end of each month.

A chemical service report (including automatic equipment dispensers) is to be supplied by the chemical supplier's technician upon request.

2.10 Occupation Health and Safety

Eating, drinking, applying cosmetics etc. is prohibited in the laundry work areas. For the safety of the employee, loose or dangling jewellery is not to be worn.

2.10.1 Hand Hygiene

- Hand hygiene is the single most important strategy in preventing associated infections that could occur in the laundry facility. Employees responsible for handling soiled linen and also for folding, packing, storing, or transporting clean linen are to maintain proper hand hygiene at all times (i.e. soap/solution and water, or a waterless antimicrobial agent to the surface of the hands).
- Staff are to complete (and keep record of) the online Hand Hygiene competency annually.

2.10.2 Personal Protective Equipment

- Exposure to soil and pathogens can be limited by the use of personal protective equipment: barrier gowns, gloves, eyewear, foot coverings and face masks depending on the level of decontaminated linen. These are to be removed prior to leaving the laundry work area.

2.10.3 Manual Handling

- Eliminate or reduce the need to lift, lower carry or otherwise handle, heavy bags of soiled laundry by:
 - use of mechanical aids such as trolleys
 - use of multiple laundry bags/trolleys to eliminate sorting
 - minimise the distance loads are carried
 - arranging work tasks and physical layout to minimise number of times the load is lifted or carried
 - keeping loads at hip height, and
 - using spring loaded inserts for laundry trolleys to keep the laundry at hip height.
- Ensure laundry bags are not over filled.

2.10.4 Noise Levels

- Monitoring of noise levels is to be conducted by an external agency and recorded bi-annually.
- Employees are to undergo hearing screening every second year.

2.11 Training

Staff are to complete the online Hand Hygiene competency annually (via Capabiliti LMS). Employees are to receive training in the safe practices of operating equipment, and the correct handling of all linen during laundry processes and procedures.

Details of staff training and validation that the training objectives and minimum level of competency are achieved, is to be documented and recorded by the Laundry Coordinator. Online and web-based training is also available.

2.12 Quality Control And Process Monitoring

The whole processing cycle is to have documented quality control procedures to ensure the cleanliness and serviceability of the linen. These procedures may include requirements to re-wash, repair, or replace linen as necessary to maintain quality standards.

The laundry service is to periodically review its entire service provision and make any adjustments/improvement as necessary and appropriate. This is to be accomplished through monthly reports and regularly meetings with laundry personnel. Any improvements are to be documented for future use or reference.

The Regional Laundry Service is to review site procedures regularly and update as required.

2.12.1 Process Monitoring

Process monitoring verifies:

- that ongoing laundry operation is producing clean linen etc. that will meet the needs of the WA Country Health Service and external clients.
- that laundry chemicals are appropriate for the equipment in the accordance with the equipment manufacturer, textile/linen classifications and water temperatures being used. Every chemical used is to have a MSDS on file and every chemical container is to be appropriately labelled.

Incoming water is to be tested on a regular basis for hardness, alkalinity, iron content and pH. The laundry washing formulas may require adjustments based on these factors.

The quality of linen provided by the laundry service is maintained as a result of continuous monitoring of recorded data. This will help to provide evidence that we meet the standards required and try to continually improve the hygienic linen in a customer-focused and efficient manner to the health services and outside clients.

Counting and invoicing accuracy. The Regional Laundry Service is to have reliable and accurate procedures in place for the weighing of linen (and the recording of such), and is to have precise invoicing procedures based on these weights.

2.12.2 Audit Tools

- To assure a quality laundry service, guided by Australian Standard AS/NZ 4146 which produces clean, hygienic in a customer focused and efficient manner audits are carried out on a regular basis.
- One tool to measure Laundry's Internal Compliance Systems is meeting
- AS/NZ 4146 and the other to measure Laundry Client Satisfaction

3. Definitions

Clean Linen	Any linen that has not been used since it was last laundered
Soiled Linen	Any linen item which has been used
Fouled Linen	Any linen which has minimal spotting of visible blood, faeces or any other body fluids on it
Heavily Foul Linen	Any linen which has large amounts of visible blood, faeces or any other body fluids on it
Infectious Linen	Any linen from a patients room that is designated infectious or clinically suspected to be infectious
Drape	Window Curtains
Curtain	Can refer to privacy or shower
Linen and Laundry Services	Linen, laundry and sewing room services provided.
Theatre Linen	Linen which has been used in theatre eg scrubs.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

WACHS South West Inland and Coastal Operations Managers and Blackwood District Manager:

- The overall accountability of the safe and effective management of the WACHS South West Inland and Coastal Laundry Services.

Blackwood and Busselton Support Services Coordinators:

- ensure that efficient and effective Laundry Services is providing in accordance with the appropriate AS/NZ standards for commercial laundry services in a clean, safe and hygienic manner and environment to WA Country Services – SW Inland and Coastal Operations.
- liaise with suppliers to maintain current knowledge of Best Practice equipment and supplies relating to laundry systems
- develop and monitors procedures and records in line with Best Practice within the Laundry Services.
- take action if any breach of this procedure should occur

All Staff are required to work within policies and guidelines to make sure that WACHS is a safe, equitable and positive place to be.

5. Compliance

Failure to comply with this policy may constitute a breach of the WA Health Code of Conduct (Code). The Code is part of the [Employment Policy Framework](#) issued pursuant to section 26 of the [Health Services Act 2016](#) (HSA) and is binding on all WACHS staff which for this purpose includes trainees, students, volunteers, researchers, contractors for service (including all visiting health professionals and agency staff) and persons delivering training or education within WACHS.

WACHS staff are reminded that compliance with all policies is mandatory.

6. Records Management

[Records Management Policy](#)

7. Evaluation

Evaluation of this policy is to be carried out by using the following tools:

- Laundry Compliance Audit Tool
- Client Satisfaction Survey

8. Standards

[National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards](#) - Standard 3

9. Legislation

List and hyperlink to relevant [Western Australian Legislation](#) or [Commonwealth legislation](#).

10. References

- [Australian Standard: 4146: 2000](#)
- [WACHS Environmental Cleaning Policy](#)
- [WACHS Personal Protective Equipment and Clothing policy suite](#)
- [Cleaning Standards for Victorian Health Facilities 2011](#)
- [Department of Health – NSW Infection Control Policy](#)
- [Department of Corrective Services Prisoner Hygiene – Personal, Clothing and Bedding – Appendix 1 – Policy Directive 19](#)
- [Great Southern – OSH Inspection Checklist - Laundry](#)

11. Related Policy Documents

- [WACHS Environmental Cleaning Policy](#)

12. Appendices

Appendix 1: [Laundry Compliance Audit Tool](#)

Appendix 2: [Laundry Client Satisfaction Audit](#)

Appendix 3: [Segregation of Linen Chart](#)

13. Policy Framework

[Public Health](#)

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Appendix 1: Laundry Compliance Audit Tool

Goal: To assure a quality laundry service, guided by Australian Standard AS 4146 which produces clean, hygienic linen in a customer focused and efficient manner.

Site: _____

If not applicable: write N/A

Requirement			
Auto Feed System	Y	N	Action Required
Lines are secure - no signs of corrosion. The area that the cleaning compounds are fed from is bunded (to protect the environment by providing a secondary containment system) or a drain is located near by. MSDSs are available. Containers of chemical solutions are clearly and accurately labelled. PPEC is available, used correctly and stored appropriately (e.g. PVC gloves, apron, face/eye protection). Laundry chemical containers (25 litre or drums) are replaced using mechanical aids, e.g. trolleys, drum lifters.			
Washing Machines and Dryers	Y	N	Action Required
Washers, dryers, spin dryers are securely fixed. Emergency stops or switchboard easily accessible. Service records sighted and up to date. Hot air from the dryers is effectively extracted to the outside. Wet linen is handled between hip and shoulder height. PPEC adequate (apron and gloves worn when handling dirty linen).			
Power Points, Plugs and Leads	Y	N	Action Required
Not frayed or cracked. Leads stored correctly. Sufficient number of power points.			
Work Benches/Folding Room/Work Areas	Y	N	Action Required

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<p>Adequate working space and lighting exist to perform the job safely.</p> <p>Sufficient ventilation – where practicable separate work area/folding room from machines.</p> <p>There is adequate space barrier between ‘dirty’ and ‘clean’ areas.</p> <p>Benches are impervious and water resistant</p> <p>Bench heights are about hip height.</p> <p>Presses are securely fixed.</p>			
<p>Footwear is suitable. (Closed-in with good sole)</p> <p>Task rotation has been implemented for tasks involving heavy manual work, repetitive tasks or tasks that require maintaining constrained postures.</p> <p>Laundry bags weigh less than 20 kg.</p> <p>Lines or rails for hanging laundry are at shoulder height or below.</p>			
Storage of Linen	Y	N	Action Required
<p>Linen stored neatly and securely – no overhangs or overloading of trolleys or shelves.</p> <p>Moderately deep shelves (e.g. 400mm) are used for soft sided items (e.g. linen or bags of loose material).</p> <p>Small items (less than 5 kg) only are stored above shoulder height or below knee height.</p> <p>Weighty items (more than 5 kg and less than 16 kg) are stored between hip and shoulder height.</p> <p>Heavy items (more than 16 kg) are stored where they can be accessed using mechanical aids, e.g. cages or trolleys.</p>			
Windows, Walls and Ceiling	Y	N	Action Required
<p>In good condition.</p>			

If not applicable: write N/A

Floors	Y	N	Action Required
Have slip resistant surfaces in wet areas. Are easy to clean. Coverings are not loose or worn. No trip hazards.			
Doors	Y	N	Action Required
Visibility through door if swinging into traffic areas. Doors maintained and not obstructed (e.g. by trolleys or boxes).			

Date:.....

Audit Completed By:

Name:

Signature:

Comments:

Appendix 2: Laundry Client Satisfaction Audit

SITE: _____	DATE: _____
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Please help us by taking a few minutes to complete this client satisfaction survey. We appreciate you're your feedback as it is important in enabling us to improve/maintain our quality of service to you.

	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
When you have had to communicate with the Laundry Service be it by phone or email is this conducted in a professional and courtesy manner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you satisfied with the response to your queries/requests.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was your query/request addressed in a timely fashion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you satisfied with quality of linen provided?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you satisfied with the Imprest system of linen provided?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you satisfied with the delivery times of linen?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

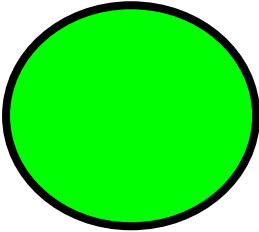
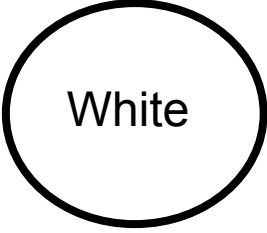
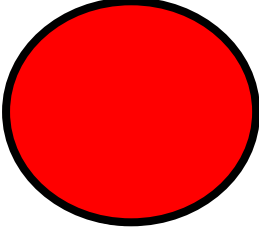
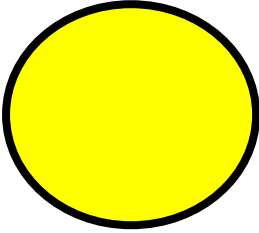
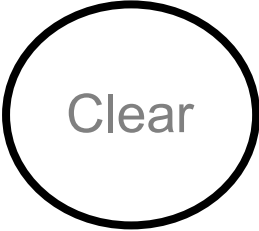
Audit Completed By:

Name:

Signature:

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Appendix 3: Segregation of Linen Chart

	<p>Green Linen bags for personal laundry</p>
	<p>White Linen bags for dry Ward linen</p>
	<p>Red Plastic bag (biodegradable) for all foul / soiled linen Bags must be tied off and once tied, cannot be untied</p>
	<p>Yellow Plastic bags for all infectious linen Bags must be tied off and once tied, cannot be untied</p>
	<p>Clear Plastic bags for sheepskins Clear Plastic bags for Kylies</p>

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