**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of the following policy is to ensure that all sterile supplies that are purchased, stored and distributed in the hospital are handled in such a way as to promote the package integrity and sterility of those products.

**PROCEDURE:**

1. Shelf life may be designated by a specific expiration date that sets a limit on the number of days a sterilized item will be considered safe for use. When the manufacturer specifies an expiration date, their guidelines are followed. However, an expiration date does not guarantee the sterility of the product; it serves as a mechanism to remind personnel to rotate supplies and use oldest dated item(s) first (i.e. utilizing FIFO method).
2. When no date of expiration is specified on the manufacturer's package, a package is considered sterile until the package integrity is compromised (i.e.: punctured, ripped, partially opened, wet.), at which point the item must be discarded.
3. The unpacking of sterile supplies in Distribution Services will take place in the staging area. Sterile items will be removed from the packing/shipping cartons and placed on a cart for transfer to the clean supply area.
4. No outside shipping cartons will be stored in the clean or sterile supply area. Storage of sterile supplies in cartons that are made from corrugated cardboard will be avoided at all times.
5. All sterile supplies originating from Distribution Surfaces or directly from manufacturer will be checked for expiration dates and package integrity prior to distributing to patient care units. Oldest dated item(s) should be distributed first.
6. Distribution Services and Surgical Supply Chain staff personnel are responsible for checking the expiration dates and package integrity of sterile supplies that they supply to the patient care unit stock areas. Oldest dated item(s) should be used first. When out-dated or damaged items are found, they are returned to Distribution Services for proper disposal.
7. Any area that stocks a special order sterile supply that is not distributed by Distribution Services will check those supplies monthly for expiration dates and package integrity. When items that have expired or have a package that has lost its integrity are found, they will be discarded.
8. All items removed from patient care unit stock areas should be checked for expiration dates and packaging integrity prior to being used on a patient.

### MANUFACTURER RECALL

1. Upon receipt of manufacturer's notice for recall of any product, departmental staff should immediately contact Supply Chain for follow-up.
2. Distribution Services and Surgery Supply Chain personnel will check the complete stock supply, including items on all the nursing units, for the given lot number(s).
3. All items collected will be returned to the warehouse for return to the company or to follow suggested method of disposal
4. Report of such findings will be sent to Infection Prevention and Control and the Infection Control Committee for further review, recommendations and, when necessary, appropriate follow up.
5. When such known items have been used on a patient, the attending physician, nursing supervisor, house supervisor and Infection Prevention and Control staff are to be notified immediately. An incident report form will be filed using the iReport system. See QIPS – 002.0 for the Event Reporting process.

**REFERENCES:**

1. APIC. Text of Infection Control and Epidemiology. Chapter 7, 2014
2. California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Article 8, Standard 70831: Central Sterile Supply.

**POLICY OWNER:**

*Director, Accreditation & Licensing, Infection Prevention, and Emergency Management*