

Soiled Utility Room - Storage of Equipment and Supplies

Site Applicability

All PHC Acute and Long Term Care Sites.

Practice Level

Basic: All direct and indirect care staff

Standard

[Soiled Utility Room \(SURs\)](#) are separate from and have no direct connection with [clean supply rooms](#) or clean/sterile supplies.

SUR shall be secure with restricted access to clinical and support services staff only with doors kept closed.

The unit leader or designate will regularly [audit](#) SURs in consultation with Infection Prevention and Control. It is recommended that the audits be completed at least monthly, kept in a binder in an accessible location on the unit, and available for review by IPAC and others (i.e. Operation Leader, Clinical Nurse Leader, Accreditation surveyor, etc.) It is an expectation that any deficiencies be addressed at the time of the audit. Please contact the IPAC Infection Control Practitioner assigned to your unit if you are experiencing barriers to completing the monthly audits.

Purpose

1. To prevent potential contamination of patient care supplies.
2. To achieve safe and effective storage of patient care equipment and items that will be stored in the SUR.
3. To provide a guideline to facilitate auditing of the SUR.

Background

This document describes Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) principles to ensure that appropriate equipment and supplies are stored in the SUR in Acute Care and Long Term Care (LTC) sites, in order to reduce the risk of contamination of clean and sterile items.

Within PHC, there are a variety of SUR configurations; each SUR layout will present unique challenges to achieve optimum processing and storage. Where the SUR configuration presents challenges, IPAC is available to assist with specific issues or planning the flow of equipment.

IPAC must be contacted for consultation on all new construction to ensure that the SURs are equipped to provide for storage of necessary supplies only, and to avoid storage of potentially inappropriate items.

Guideline

Soiled Utility Room Configuration:

Each SUR should have:

1. A closed [flusher/washer/disinfector](#)
2. A contaminated area, which:
 - Is short term staging for [contaminated items](#) only
 - Is close to or beside the flusher/washer/disinfector
 - Is clearly labeled as a contaminated area
 - Is constructed of materials that will withstand cleaning and disinfection chemical and friction i.e. plastic, steel or sealed wood.
 - Is cleaned daily
 - Does not include the top of the flusher/washer/disinfector.
3. A storage area for processed [blueware](#), which,
 - May be in the SUR
 - Is clearly labeled for equipment that has been [cleaned](#) and [disinfected](#)
 - Is separated from the contaminated storage area.
 - Is separated from the flusher/washer/disinfector
 - Is raised off the floor
 - Does not include the top of the flusher/washer/disinfector
4. Labels for both “contaminated” area and “processed” area will be:
 - Placed in a heat sealed plastic cleanable cover
 - Posted in a clearly visible location.
 - Promptly replaced if damaged or missing
5. Clearly posted operating instructions for the type of flusher/washer/disinfector in service. Instructions are available from the manufacturer.

Storage of Equipment and Supplies:

Soiled patient care items/[non-critical equipment](#) will be taken to the SUR, where they will be cleaned before being moved to an equipment storage room/area. Patient/resident care equipment from a discharged patient/resident may be cleaned by housekeeping staff in the patient/resident room, or taken to the SUR for cleaning. The cleaned equipment will be then moved to an equipment storage room/area (e.g. IV poles, commodes, etc).

Every effort should be made by each unit to find space to create a separate storage room in order to eliminate storage of cleaned items within the SUR. As an interim measure on units that do not have an equipment storage room, the cleaned item will be tagged with a “clean” sign by housekeeping staff and may be placed in a clearly marked designated area within the SUR.

Bedpans and urinals containing body fluids will be processed in the closest flusher as soon as possible, and only stored temporarily if the flusher is in use. If the flusher is in use, the soiled item may be stored on the soiled handling shelf, and as soon as the cycle is complete, the processed item will be removed from the machine (with clean hands) and the next item put into the flusher.

Items Approved for Storage in the SUR:

SUR items will be limited to equipment or items that have been in contact with body fluids or waste, or containers that are used for non-sterile laboratory specimens.

- [Contaminated items](#) that have had contact with body fluids or waste
- Automated bedpan [flusher/disinfector](#)
- Commodes (soiled)
- Soiled linen containers
- Sharps container in use
- Bedpans/urinals/kidney basins with body fluids
- Soiled equipment prior to cleaning or sending to Medical Device Reprocessing Department (MDRD) for [sterilization](#)
- Trash containers
- Disinfected [blueware](#), bedpans and urinals (after removal from the automated flusher)
- Bagged bedpans, urinals, basins, and kidney basins from MDRD (may be stored in an equipment storage area)
- [Disinfected](#) urine collection containers (e.g. triangle containers)

Stored items/supplies used for specimen testing or disposal of contaminated items:

- Unsterile urine specimen containers (e.g. urinalysis tubes)
- Urine toilet collection containers
- Stool specimen containers
- Biohazardous specimen bags
- Unused sharps containers
- Urine testing equipment (e.g. test strips etc.)
- Disposable liners or containers
- Trash bags
- Disinfectant and rinse solutions for the automated flusher
- Enzymatic cleaner
- Specimen fridge

Items Unacceptable for Storage in the SUR:

These include clean and sterile items that may potentially become contaminated if stored in the SUR, including supplies that are used for mouth care, personal hygiene, sterile specimen collection, wound care, etc.:

- Soap
- Shampoo
- Lotion/cream
- Mouth care items
- Denture cups
- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste
- Straws
- Tongue depressors
- Disposable razors
- Facial tissue
- Suction catheters and handheld oral suction
- Sterile specimen containers (e.g. urine, sputum, etc.)
- Sterile swabs for lab specimens
- Sterile urinary catheter supplies
- Vaginal speculums
- Nasogastric supplies
- Dressing supplies
- Sterile syringes
- Disposable protectors (e.g. "bibs")
- Shoe covers
- Tape
- Linen
- Alcohol gel/foam
- Skin antiseptics/prep solutions
- Glove boxes
- Mask boxes
- Suction containers
- Disinfectant wipes
- Incontinent pads/briefs
- Incontinent supplies (e.g. rectal tubing supplies)
- Graduated urine collection containers (e.g. "triangular containers")
- Urine toilet collection containers
- Enema supplies
- Personal patient/resident items (vases, clothing, mobility aids, etc.)
- Personal items belonging to staff (footwear, clothing, lunch bag, etc.)
- Items stored on the floor (including corrugated cardboard boxes)
- Unused equipment or broken equipment (find appropriate space)

Related Documents

- [Soiled Utility Room Audit Tool](#)
- [B-00-07-16061](#) - Clean Supply Room - Storage of Equipment and Supplies

References

- Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Group. (2017). Z8000-11. <https://www.csagroup.org/standards/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019). Guideline for Environmental Infection Control in Health-Care Facilities. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/pdf/guidelines/environmental-guidelines-P.pdf>
- Provincial Infection Control Network of British Columbia. (2016). British Columbia Best Practices for Environmental Cleaning for Prevention and Control of Infections in All Healthcare Settings and Programs. Retrieved from <https://www.picnet.ca/wp-content/uploads/British-Columbia-Best->

[Practices-for-Environmental-Cleaning-for-Prevention-and-Control-of-Infections-in-All-Healthcare-Settings-and-Programs.pdf](#)

Definitions

“Blueware” includes plastic (blue) or steel equipment used to collect or hold body fluids or patient’s contaminated items.

“Clean Supply Rooms (CSRs)” are used for storage of clean and sterile items, and shall be physically separate from and have no direct connection with dirty workrooms or dirty holding rooms.

“Cleaning” is the physical removal of visible soil, body fluids or foreign materials. Cleaning is accomplished by manual or mechanical means, using water with detergent or enzymatic products and must be performed before disinfection can occur.

“Closed flusher/washer/disinfector” is a self-contained mechanical system, which uses pressurized water and detergent to clean and flush blue wear and uses moist heat to disinfect blue wear (e.g., Tornado, Getinge, Meiko).

“Dirty/Contaminated items” have been used for patient care and may be visibly soiled or come in contact with the patient’s body fluids, person, or environment.

“Low Level Disinfection” is a chemical or heat related process that reduces most pathogenic microorganisms, including MRSA, VRE, HIV, HBV, and HCV (except mycobacteria or spores) on non-critical equipment to a level unlikely to be hazardous.

“Non-Critical equipment” includes patient care equipment that comes in contact with the patient’s intact skin but not mucous membranes or sterile sites, and requires low level disinfection (e.g. bedpans, commodes).

“Soiled Utility Rooms (SURs)” are used for storage and cleaning of contaminated items, and shall be physically separate from and have no direct connection with clean workrooms or clean supply rooms. SURs shall contain a clinical sink and a hand-washing station. Fixtures shall include a hot and cold mixing faucet as well as a work counter and space for separate covered containers for soiled linen and/or a variety of waste types.

“Sterilization” is the destruction of all forms of microbial life including bacteria, viruses, spores, and fungi. Items must be cleaned thoroughly before effective sterilization can take place.



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