## Purpose
This operating Standard provides guidance for the expectations of appropriate washing and drying of linens.

## Applicability
This Operating Standard applies to all Covenant Health Laundry Services employees, students, volunteers, and any staff member washing resident/patient laundry or linens. Compliance with this protocol is required for any other persons acting on behalf of Covenant Health, including contracted service providers as applicable.

## Responsibility
All Covenant Health employees and contract service providers are required to follow the steps outlined for handling of soiled linens in order to maintain a clean and safe environment.

## Principles
A standard process for washing and drying of laundry and linens helps ensure the prevention of the spread of infection and reduces the risk of contamination.

## Procedures
### TOOLS NEEDED
- Gowns, goggles, face shield, utility gloves

### SAFETY PRACTICES
1. Infection Prevention & Control (IPC) Hand Hygiene and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) resources are available through [http://www.compassionnet.ca/InfectionPreventionControl/Workplace_IPC_HandHygienePoster2_April2015.pdf](http://www.compassionnet.ca/InfectionPreventionControl/Workplace_IPC_HandHygienePoster2_April2015.pdf)
2. Hand hygiene facilities shall be made available in all areas where soiled linen is present as well as common areas.
3. It is recommended that individuals involved in the handling, disposal, and transportation of soiled linens be immunized against Hepatitis B.
4. Any employee involved in the handling, transportation, or disposal of soiled linens shall have completed any and all applicable training prior to performing the work (e.g. Hazard Identification, biomedical waste disposal, safe work practices, etc.)
5. Employees are not permitted to eat, drink, apply cosmetics or lip balm, or handle contact lenses in any of the laundry areas, including the sorting soiled linen, due to the risk of contamination.
6. Staff must always follow safe work practices, including proper
ergonomic practices.

7. Soiled linens must always be handled appropriately and in a safe and efficient manner that minimizes the likelihood of spills, leaks, or exposure.
   a. All employees handling soiled linen must treat those linens as potentially infectious and follow Routine Practices/ Standard Precautions, including the use of appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). PPE includes:
      - Gloves (moisture and puncture resistant) – for sorting soiled linen
      - Gloves (general routine) – for general handling of soiled linen bags
      - Barrier Gown (minimum ‘Level 2 Liquid Resistant’)
      - Full-face shield OR a fluid impervious face mask and eye protection
      - Bouffant Cap
   b. Change gloves and other PPE if they are damaged, or if moving from a ‘dirty task’ to a ‘clean task’ to prevent cross contamination.

8. Sharps found in soiled linen can pose a serious risk of infection to laundry employees.
   a. Any sharps discovered shall be isolated and treated as contaminated. Sharps are to be discarded in designated sharps containers.
   b. In the event that sharps are found in the soiled linen area, Laundry Services employee shall properly dispose of them in a sharps container, using appropriate safety precautions, including PPE.

Laundry Services employees will document each sharp found in a Workplace Incident Report.

Steps

Washing of linen

1. Confirm adequate chemical supply for the washing and drying process.
2. Perform hand hygiene. Apply appropriate PPE.
3. Pre-treat stained linen according to procedure:
   - Work in well lighted area
   - Consider the following factors in determining method of stain removal:
- Type of fiber
- Type of stain
- Color fastness

- Apply stain removal following Manufactures Instructions for Use (MIFU). Thoroughly rinse all stain removal agents from fibers as per manufacturer’s recommendation.

2. Follow MIFU for the operation of the washing machine.

3. Combine similar loads to fill washer at 80% capacity minimum. Processing of small loads is discouraged to prevent wastage of chemicals and water.

4. Close door of machine, ensure door handle locks into place.

5. Initiate the appropriate wash program.

6. Wash mops as a separate load.

7. Slings should be washed and dried according to MIFU.

Drying of Linen

1. Place washed linen in dryers, following MIFU.

2. Use proper program setting for load/fabric type.

3. Large loads take longer to dry; separate loads that are heavy linen to ensure a faster drying time.

4. Do not open door to check linen once dryer is going. Wait until cycle is completed.

5. Always cool linen before taking out of dryer to keep from wrinkling.

6. Fold and/or hang up laundry as soon as it is dry.

7. Minimize or eliminate ironing where ever possible. New linens should not be ironed.

Footnotes:

Maintenance - report plugged or damaged toilets, urinals, sinks/fixtures, lights, walls, flooring, etc. to unit staff and to your Supervisor or submit maintenance requisition where appropriate

Cleaning/Disinfecting Products – Never mix chemicals. Review SDS for product handling and precautions. Product(s) must be measured properly and changed after every case.
Chemical must remain on surface for entire kill cycle / contact time. Refer to specific chemical directions. Ensure proper solution concentration testing Standard Operating Procedures are followed and documented. Use only hospital approved cleaning and disinfecting products. If at any time you are unsure of which tool(s) and/or product(s) to use for a task, consult your Supervisor.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** – Clothing or equipment worn by staff for protection against hazards. To “Don” is to put on, and to “Doff” is to remove.

**Additional Precautions (AP)** – Precautions (i.e. Contact Precautions, Droplet Precautions, Airborne Precautions) that are necessary in addition to Routine Practices for certain pathogens or clinical presentations. These precautions are based on the method of transmission (e.g. contact, droplet, airborne).

**Hazard Assessment** – Health and Safety Hazard Assessments mitigate the risk of incident/injury or illness from exposure to biological, chemical, or physical contaminants. To reduce the risk of incident/injury or illness appropriate controls must be put into place. Health and Safety Hazard Assessments must be completed and reviewed before an Environmental Services employee is exposed to contaminants which may pose incident/injury or illness. This is done to protect the health and safety of Environmental Services employee, other staff and patients/residents.

**Employee Incident/Injury Reporting** – Report incidents or unsafe work to your Supervisor and to OHS through the incident management process as required.

**Risk Assessment** – Assessment conducted before each interaction with a patient/resident or their environment to determine the risk of exposure to infectious agents, and the appropriate interventions (additional precautions, PPE etc.) to reduce the risk of transmission.

**References**

- Environmental Services Personal Protective Equipment Standard (3.2.10)