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<b>Infection Control Manual</b>		
	Policy Name	<b>Laundry and Linen Service</b>
	Policy Number	<b>IC 0034</b>
	Date this Version Effective	<b>May 2015</b>
	Responsible for Content	<b>Hospital Epidemiology</b>

## I. Description

Describes infection prevention guidelines followed by personnel who handle soiled patient linens.

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## II. Rationale

Soiled linen is a significant source of microbial contamination. Adequate procedures for collection, transportation, processing, and storage of hospital linen are essential in order to eliminate the possibility of infection from this source.

## III. Policy

### A. Personnel

1. Personnel should adhere to guidelines established by the Hospital Occupational Health Service (OHS). (See "Infection Control and Screening Program: Occupational Health Service.")
  - a. Personnel must be familiar with the Exposure Control Plan for Bloodborne Pathogens. Personnel must be prompt in reporting all needlestick/sharps, mucous membrane, and non-intact skin exposures from blood and other potentially infectious materials to OHS by calling the **Needlestick Hotline at 984-974-4480**.
  - b. Soiled laundry will be handled as contaminated and all employees are trained to follow Standard Precautions. Gown, gloves and mask will be worn, as indicated, to protect employees from exposures (refer to the Exposure Control Plan for Bloodborne Pathogens).
  - c. Hand hygiene should be performed after handling contaminated linens and prior to handling clean linens. If hands are not visibly soiled, a waterless antimicrobial agent may be used. CHG 2% and water is also an approved hand hygiene product. Staff will follow the Infection Control Policy: Hand Hygiene and Use of Antiseptics for Skin Preparation.

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- d. There should be no eating, drinking, applying cosmetics or lip balm, or handling contact lenses in the laundry and linen area, except in the designated break area.

### **B. Handling and Transporting Soiled Linen**

1. Clean and soiled linen will be separate during storage and transport.
2. All soiled linens will be bagged at the location of use and will not be sorted or rinsed in the location of use.
3. Linen should be removed with a minimum of agitation in order to prevent gross airborne microbial contamination of air, surfaces or personnel. Soiled linen should not be placed on the floor or on furniture. Linen should be placed directly into a linen bag, which should not be overfilled and must be closed by pulling over the flap.
4. Soiled laundry will be bagged in linen bags that prevent soak-through and/or leakage of fluids to the exterior. If the outside bag becomes wet or soiled it must be double bagged into a second linen bag.
5. Soiled linen is placed in bags for transport rather than being transported un-bagged. The transport carts are cleaned in a cart washing machine at the Quality Textile Services (QTS) off-site laundry facility each time they are used.
6. Laundry chute intake openings should be cleaned by Environmental Services weekly or when visibly soiled with an EPA-registered disinfectant detergent. All linen must be bagged prior to placing linen into the chute. All chute doors should be kept closed, be tight fitting and should not be located in halls in patient care areas.
7. Hospital employee-owned clothing contaminated with blood and other potentially infectious material should be managed according to the Exposure Control Plan for Bloodborne Pathogens.

### **C. Laundry Procedure**

1. Linen is sent out to Quality Textile Services (QTS), Inc. See Appendix 1 for the facility's Infection Control Policy.
2. Mop heads are washed by Environmental Services. An industrial washer and dryer are located in the department.
3. Washers and dryers are available in certain areas of the hospital (e.g., Psychiatry, Pediatrics, Rehabilitation Center, PICU, BMTU, and 4 ONC). (For details, see the Infection Control policies for the Rehabilitation Unit, Psychiatric Units and Infection Control Guidelines for Adult and Pediatric Inpatient Care).
4. Laundering facilities, when located in the hospital, are separated from the clean-linen processing area, from patient rooms, from areas of food preparation and storage, and from areas in which clean material and equipment are stored.

### **D. Returning Linen to Hospital**

To protect against contamination during transport, clean linen should be wrapped in impervious bags or covered at the processing site (QTS) and should remain covered until ready for use.

### **E. Storage**

Clean linen should be handled as little as possible and should be covered or wrapped before being stored. Storage in clean, covered linen carts, which are wheeled to patient areas, helps to minimize handling of linen as well as to protect it against airborne contamination. Carts should be cleaned on a monthly basis with an EPA-registered germicidal detergent to maintain their cleanliness. Linen closet doors should be kept closed. Linen should be stored at least 8"

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off the floor, 18" below fire sprinklers, and 5" from the ceiling. Linen from patient rooms will not be returned to the linen cart or shelf until after it has been laundered.

### **F. Education**

Infection Control updates that include the OSHA mandatory Bloodborne Pathogen education will be provided annually via LMS.

### **G. Policy Enforcement**

This policy will be implemented by the Directors of Linen Services and Environmental Services at UNC Health Care and Quality Textile Services (QTS), Inc.

## **IV. References**

Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Health-Care Facilities, 2003

## **V. Reviewed/Approved by**

Hospital Infection Control Committee

## **VI. Original Policy Date and Revisions**

Revised on Oct 2004, Mar 2007, Feb 2010, May 2012, May 2015

### Appendix 1: Infection Control Policy for Quality Textile Services, Inc.

#### Personnel Practices

1. All employees with responsibilities in which exposure to soiled linen can be reasonably anticipated must abide by the standards in the exposure control plan.
2. The exposure control plan is a separate set of documents available to all employees in the facility and is to be used in conjunction with this policy.
3. The exposure control plan is to be utilized as a reference for:
  - a. List of job classifications identifying those with risk for exposure.
  - b. Universal precautions
  - c. Engineering controls and safe work practices including hand washing and handling of sharps
  - d. Use of personal protection equipment including gowns, gloves, masks, hair covers, and eye protection
  - e. Housekeeping and laundry standards
  - f. Management of regulated waste
  - g. Hepatitis B vaccination program
  - h. Exposure management
  - i. Hazard communication

#### Standard Precautions

All employees identified in the exposure control plan are required to practice standard precautions when exposed to soiled linen. Standard precautions involve wearing gloves, hair covers and garment covers when handling or exposed to soiled linen.

#### Saniwash Cart Wash Procedures

After the soiled linen is removed, the laundry carts are sent through an automatic cart wash machine where they are cleaned and sanitized. The cart washes uses Oasis 499 which is a quaternary disinfectant.

#### Hand washing

1. Hand washing is the most important factor in preventing the spread of infection and must be done:
  - a. On arrival to work
  - b. Before leaving the rest room
  - c. Before and after eating
  - d. After protective equipment is removed
  - e. Before handling clean linen

#### Dress Code

1. Employees working with soiled linen must wear protective equipment including gloves, clothing covers and head covers.
2. Employees working on the clean side of the operation must wear head coverings especially when working on or with irons, feeders or other clean side equipment.

#### Employee Health

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1. Employees with skin infections or draining skin lesions should not handle linen – clean or soiled.
2. Questions regarding safety and the ability to work during an illness should be directed to the Plant Manager.
3. Any employee with exposure to blood or body fluids from a needle stick injury must report the incident to the Supervisor who is required to file a written report detailing the incident. Medical evaluation options must be offered at this time.

### Department Functions

1. Linen Processing
2. Soiled Linen
  - a. The soiled side of the laundry is a totally separate room from the clean side. The two sides are separated by walls with no air flow through to the clean side. Also, the soiled side is vented to the outside by the roof and wall exhaust system.
  - b. All soiled linen is contained in designated bags which are transported inside carts from the hospitals to the inside of the laundry facility through the soil side entrance.
  - c. Protective equipment is worn by those working with soiled linen.
  - d. Soiled linen is washed at a temperature above 160 degrees using institutional laundry detergent with a bacteriostatic softener and hydrogen peroxide.
3. Clean Linen
  - a. Following the wash cycle, linen is machine dried for a minimum of 10 minutes at a temperature of approximately 180 degrees.
  - b. Linen is sorted, ironed, folded and placed on clean linen exchange carts.
  - c. Linen dropped on the floor or soiled in any way is rewashed.
  - d. At the end of the workday all unprocessed, clean linen is covered.
  - e. Clean linen is transported to the hospitals covered and is delivered inside the facilities to a designated area.
4. Department Cleaning
  - a. Daily:
    - Clean and dust the floors on clean side of the facility.
    - Clean all soiled carts using the automatic cart washer. Also, spray with EPA approved germicide solution.
    - Clean the floor of the soil side of the operation.
    - Clean the exterior of all equipment and machinery.
    - Clean and dust all tables, counters and carts on the clean side of the operation.
  - b. Weekly:
    - High dust the clean side of the operation.
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Note: Additional housekeeping duties are performed as necessary or as determined by the area Supervisor.

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Dwayne E Konczal General Manager

Date

C: Infection control

Revised/Reviewed 4/22/2015