

Policy Applies to

All staff employed by Mercy.

Credentialed Specialists, will be supported to meet policy requirements.

Related Standards:

- Australian/New Zealand Standard: Laundry Practice 4146, 2000
- Health and Safety at Work Act 2015
- Infection and Prevention and Control Standards NZS 8134:2021
- Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996
- EQulP6 Standard 3.2, Safe Environment
- EQulP6 Standard 1.5, Safe Care and Services.

Rationale:

To minimise the risk of infection throughout the hospital by ensuring staff understand how to appropriately handle and process Clean/Dirty/Fouled and Infectious linen

To ensure that all areas have the appropriate linen to meet their service areas requirements

To ensure there is a process to manage the cleaning of all other washable items i.e. curtains / drapes/pillows and microfiber cloths.

Cultural Considerations:

We acknowledge there can be specific cultural needs with reference to linen management for example that the head is Tapu in te au Māori. Therefore different coloured linen is used to differentiate placement of items such as pillows and wash cloths.

Definitions:

Clean linen

Any linen that has not been used since it was last laundered

Dirty 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 fouled linen

Any linen which has large amounts of visible blood, faeces or any other body fluids on it

Infectious linen

Any linen from a patient room that is designated isolation

Drape

Window Curtain

Curtain

Can refer to privacy or shower.

Objectives:

- To ensure linen is washed/dried/stored, transported and bagged in a manner that minimises infection risk for patients, staff and visitors
- That staff correctly segregate linen into the correct categories.

Implementation:

- Linen purchase changes (including style, fabric and manufacturer) will be reviewed through the Product Evaluation Committee process
- Staff will be educated in linen handling and segregation procedures as part of their orientation
- Linen handling signage will be displayed in staff change rooms
- Washing guides will be supported/created.

Evaluation:

- Product Evaluation Committee submission
- Scheduled cleaning documentation for linen trolleys, bins ,privacy curtains and drapes
- Laundry environmental audit
- Service area environmental audits
- Incident forms
- User feedback including patients and staff.

Associated Documents:

External

- Australian / New Zealand Standards 3789.2:1996 Textiles for healthcare facilities & institutions.

Internal

- MDRO Policy
- Safe Handling policy
- Laundry Services Work Manual
- Product Evaluation Policy
- Isolation Policy
- Hand Hygiene Policy.
- Infectious disease patient management

Process

Patient Allergies

The Linen services offer a non- allergenic sensitive washing power for sensitive skin conditions, also pure cotton bed linen for allergies to polyester blend fabric.

Linens Purchase & Imprest Management

- Laundry and housekeeping staff will review and restock service area linen requirements on a daily basis and linen stock will be altered to meet the workload requirements
- The Housekeeping team leader will review the linen imprest levels with the Associate Charge Nurse or Clinical Nurse Manager and housekeeping staff annually or as requested
- Any new linen changes will be reviewed through the product evaluation process.

Linens Bags Colour Code for collection of all dirty linen

McAuley Ward,

Use white linen bags for dirty linen.

Manaaki by Mercy

Use white linen bags with green spots ribbon

Callaghan, ICU

Use white linen bags with blue ribbon

When using red bags, use the red bag with blue ribbon

DSU

- Use blue linen bags for dirty linen.

Cardiac Catheter Laboratory

- Red bags

Theatre

- Use large white linen bags for all white Theatre linen.

Chemotherapy Unit / Cancer Care

- Use white linen bags for dirty linen
- If linen is cytotoxic contaminated use a disintegrating liner; tie the top and place inside a yellow linen bag then into a white vinyl bag with a purple band.

Kitchen & Cafe

- Use small green linen bag.

Linens Bags Colour Code for collection of all fouled linen

- *Fouled linen* - Use **red** linen bags (eg, blood, vomit or faeces).
- *Heavily fouled linen* (blood, vomit, and faeces), use disintegrating liners; tie the top and place inside the linen bag. Excess faeces and vomit should be removed from linen before it is placed in laundry bags.

Linen Bags Colour Code for collection of all infectious linen

Note: The inner yellow bag should not be tied, but the disintegrating liner and the vinyl bag should be tied. When using disintegrating liners, please notify laundry staff that these bags have been dispatched down the chute (as they start dissolving if laundry is wet and bags are not immediately collected)

- Use a disintegrating liner; tie the top and place inside a yellow linen bag then into a white vinyl bag with a green band.

Chemotherapy Unit / Cancer Care

- If linen is cytotoxic contaminated use a disintegrating liner; tie the top and place inside a yellow linen bag then into a white vinyl bag with a purple band.

Linen Transport

Clean Linen

- Clean linen is transported on a dedicated trolley that is cleaned as required and as a minimum bi annually.

Dirty/Fouled or Infectious Linen

- Is transported in laundry bags dependent on amount these may be placed in dedicated “soiled linen” trolleys, which are cleaned regularly or via the laundry chutes which are cleaned as a minimum annually or when required
- Soiled linen should not pass through food preparation or food storage areas.

Linen Storage

Clean

- Clean linen is stored in a clean, dry, dust free environment in an area that is geographically separated from soiled linen to prevent contamination (e.g. by aerosols, dust, moisture and vermin)
- Suitable areas for storing clean linen include portable covered carts, a closet or room used solely for the purpose of storing clean linen
- Shelves must be cleaned as part of the HK cyclic cleaning roster
- Clean linen stock must be rotated (first in first out).

Dirty/Fouled or Infectious Linen

- Soiled linen should be stored in a designated area (e.g. dirty utility rooms) Soiled linen must be stored securely (i.e. not in public areas) until collected. Soiled linen must not be stored in carpeted areas.

Patients' Clothing:

Mercy hospital does not routinely launder patient clothing. Laundry staff will provide this service on a case by case basis following notification

- When sending clothing to the laundry, place in a clear plastic bag marked clearly on the outside with the patient's room and bed number and dispatch to the Laundry.

Other items

Privacy Curtains / Drapes

- Any curtains or drapes purchased for clinical areas must be machine washable, disposable may be used in higher risk areas (If disposable they should be replaced as a minimum every 12 months or when visibly soiled)
- Curtains / drapes should be free of visible staining or accumulation of debris or mould.
- Laundering of curtains/drapes throughout the hospital must be carried out annually and be recorded by the laundry service. The Linen Service Coordinator will arrange for the removal and rehangng of the drapes.
- The laundry should be contacted if drapes require additional cleaning, following soiling or from a room used for patient contact isolation.

Shower curtains

- Replaced on discharge – single rooms
- Replaced twice weekly – 4 bed wards

Pillows

All pillows must be covered with an impervious waterproof cover. If the cover becomes soiled or compromised, it must be discarded and the pillow sent to the laundry for washing.

Manual Handling Equipment- Slippy Sam

Patients should have if required exclusive use of a sliding sheet which will be laundered on their discharge from the hospital or if it becomes soiled

Mop heads

Mop heads must be machine washed separately from other items rotation of these items will be managed by the Housekeeping team

Micro fibre cloths

Must be machine washed separately from other items rotation of these items will be managed by the Housekeeping team.

NOTES

- Laundry staff should be notified by phone when there is linen from an isolation room to be processed.
- For suspected or known cases of CJD (Creutzfeldt Jacob Disease), linen will be placed in yellow biohazard bag and incinerated
- For patients placed in contact isolation a linen carrier containing a small yellow bag with disintegrating liner is to be kept covered immediately inside the patient's room when ready to be sent to the Laundry, the yellow bag will be placed into the vinyl bag with a green band.
- Before sending linen bag down laundry chute- the drawstring must be closed with the toggle before dispatching down the chute.
- Linen bags must never be more than two thirds full to avoid creating a manual handling hazard for laundry staff (if it is difficult for the person to lift who is sending Laundry down, it will be difficult for the Laundry staff to lift – separate the load into more than one bag)
- Surgical scrubs - Care should be taken to check that pockets of scrubs are empty and name badge removed before sending scrubs to the laundry. (Collection boxes are located in staff change rooms)
- Damaged linen should be separated and bagged with a note for repair or review for replacement to laundry staff
- Staff sorting soiled or contaminated laundry must wear protective clothing (gown) and wear gloves. This includes cytotoxic soiled linen.
- Laundry bags will be made from appropriate impermeable material which is free from defects and has an effective means of closing.