

Supply Bags: Code, Healthcare, Public Health, Medical, Visiting or Professional

Best practice recommendations

- Select a **supply bag** made of non-porous, easy to clean or machine-washable material and replace it when it becomes worn, e.g., cracks, tears.
- Store only sterile or clean supplies in the supply bag.
- Maintain the integrity of clean and sterile packages and products until point-of-use. For more detail, refer to the IPC Best Practice Recommendation: [Storage of Clean and Sterile Supplies in Clinical Areas](#).
 - Clean plastic containers, e.g., boxes or bags may be used to group supplies, to maintain cleanliness, and to prevent damage or leakage. Replace containers if torn or damaged.
- Single-use items are preferred. For more detail, refer to the Alberta Health Services (AHS) policy for [Single-Use Critical and Semi-Critical Medical Devices](#).
 - Discard single-use items after use.
 - Discard sharps into a sharps container secured in an upright position separate from clean supplies, e.g., outer compartment of the bag dedicated for this purpose.
- Clean, disinfect or sterilize reusable items after use according to manufacturer's instructions.
- If multi-use containers, e.g., skin antiseptics are used:
 - Choose the smallest suitable size for the task to be performed.
 - Discard when empty or if there is evidence of contamination.
 - Label at time of opening with the expiry date.
 - Discard on or before the expiry date.
 - Do not refill or top-up.
- Follow routine practices applicable for the setting: [Acute Care](#), [Community-based Services](#), and [Continuing Care](#). Information on corrections health is available on AHS Insite Home > Teams > Infection Prevention & Control (IPC) > Corrections Facilities IPC.
 - Perform hand hygiene in accordance with the 4 Moments for hand hygiene described in the AHS [Hand Hygiene Policy](#), e.g., before accessing supplies.
 - Do not re-enter the supply bag with contaminated hands or gloves as doing so will contaminate the remaining supplies.
 - Place the supply bag onto a clean, dry, hard surface, e.g., tile, cement, sidewalk, table or countertop away from floor edges or baseboards.
 - Placement of the supply bag is not a priority in an emergency, e.g., Code Blue.
 - If there are known environmental concerns where care is provided, e.g., the patient is on Contact Precautions, home is infested with bed bugs or other pests or the environment is grossly soiled with blood or body fluids:

- Take only necessary supplies from the bag into the area and not the entire supply bag or
- Place the supply bag on a barrier, e.g., plastic bag, blue pad or poly sheet and discard the barrier after use.
- Transport reusable contaminated items in a dedicated, covered, leak-proof container or plastic bag dedicated to this purpose for cleaning and disinfection or sterilization.
 - Label the container “Dirty.”
- Clean the exterior of the bag or launder if visibly soiled in accordance with manufacturer’s instructions for use, e.g., wipe off the surface with a facility provided disinfectant.
- Clean the supply bag pockets, seams, straps inside with a facility provided disinfectant such as an accelerated hydrogen peroxide product on a regularly scheduled basis depending on intended use and likelihood of contamination, e.g., weekly (Corrections) or monthly (Homecare).
- Remove, inspect, and restock contents:
 - After use in an emergency situation
 - When contents are visibly soiled and
 - During regularly scheduled cleaning.
- Document and maintain a record of cleaning and restocking activities.

Definitions

Supply Bag means a bag, kit or container used to contain, organize and transfer supplies from one place to another made of durable material that is easily cleaned or washable, e.g., Cordura® nylon. The supply bag may be referred to as a code bag, healthcare bag, public health bag, medical bag, visiting bag, or professional supply bag.

Resource

[Supply Bags Checklist](#)

References

1. Alberta Health Services. 2016. Infection Prevention and Control. Community-based Services Resource Manual. Professional Supply Bags. Retrieved from <http://www.ahsweb.ca/ipc/professional-supply-bags-z0-rm-community>.
2. Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology. 2013. Guide to Infection Prevention in Emergency Medical Services. APIC Implementation Guide. Retrieved from http://www.apic.org/Resource_/EliminationGuideForm/e1ac231d-9d35-4c42-9ca0-822c23437e18/File/EMS_Guide_web.pdf.
3. Mc Goldrick M. 2014. Bag Technique. Home Healthcare Nurse. Vol.32. No. 1.

Version history

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V6	2025-05-21	Minor change. BPR revised to reflect AHS Branding 2024 and IPC Visual Identity formatting updates.



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