Key Partners for Water-Related Issues in Medical Device Reprocessing Areas (MDRA)

Practice Support Recommendation

Purpose

To outline the appropriate partners' notification and response process when a water quality issue arises in the Medical Device Reprocessing Area (MDRA). Prompt identification and communication are critical to ensuring the safety and integrity of reprocessed medical devices and to minimizing risk to patient care.

Application

This guidance applies to all personnel involved in Medical Device Reprocessing, Infection Prevention and Control (IPC), Facility Maintenance and Engineering (FME), and any additional stakeholders (e.g., equipment manufacturer/vendor, and operating room/unit manager) who may be required to support risk assessment, investigation, and mitigation actions in response to water quality concerns within the MDRA.

This document is part of a suite of water quality support recommendations for MDRAs and is intended to be used alongside the associated documents. The full suite of documents can be found here: Medical Device Reprocessing | Alberta Health Services

Water quality issue response

When a water quality issue is identified in the MDRA, whether by MDRA staff or end users, an initial risk assessment will be performed by the following partners, see Appendix A for an example. The responsibilities of each group are outlined below and may include.

Medical Device Reprocessing Area (MDRA) Leadership

1. Assess operational impact
2. Modify reprocessing activities if required
3. Communicate internally with MDR staff
4. Document affected products
5. Communication with equipment manufacturer/ vendor

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Version	Date (YYYY-MM)
Created	2026-03
Revised	

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Facility Maintenance & Engineering (FM&E)

1. Investigate source of water issue (e.g., temperature, flow, RO/DI system)
2. Coordinate any urgent repairs required to address the issue.
3. Document and communicate resolution timelines
4. Contact Environmental Public Health regarding possible water testing (may also be requested by IPC)
5. Communication with equipment manufacturer/vendor, if applicable Identify any impacts on infrastructure and equipment and escalate concerns as appropriate.

Infection Prevention & Control (IPC)

1. Evaluate infection control risks
2. Contact IPC leadership
3. Contact IPC Physician/MOH
4. Guide mitigation strategies (e.g., holding contaminated devices, alternate workflows)
5. Advise on incident reporting/escalation (e.g., reporting as IPC Concern)

Site Administration/ Operational Leadership (or equivalent)

1. Support operational decisions (e.g., diversion, shutdown) in consultation with Surgical Services
2. Communicate with external agencies or clinical areas as needed

Following the initial risk assessment, site administration/operational leadership or MDRA leadership will determine whether there is a need to convene a multidisciplinary team (MDT).

The MDT is responsible for reviewing the findings, implementing mitigation measures, coordinating communication, evaluating corrective actions and evaluating the need for patient disclosures. Meetings should occur regularly and continue until the water quality issue is fully resolved, all affected services within the MDRA are safely restored, and reprocessing activities can resume without risk. Consider reconvening the MDT after resolution of the issue to debrief and document findings.

The MDT may include but is not limited to:

- Site MDRA Executive Director or designate
- Facilities Maintenance and Engineering

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- Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)
- Surgery Program Executive Director
- IPC Physician/MOH
- Site Administration/Senior Leadership
- Workplace Health and Safety
- Environmental Public Health
- Equipment Manufacturers/Vendors
- Linen and Environmental Services
- Clinical Engineering (CE) / Biomedical Equipment Technologist

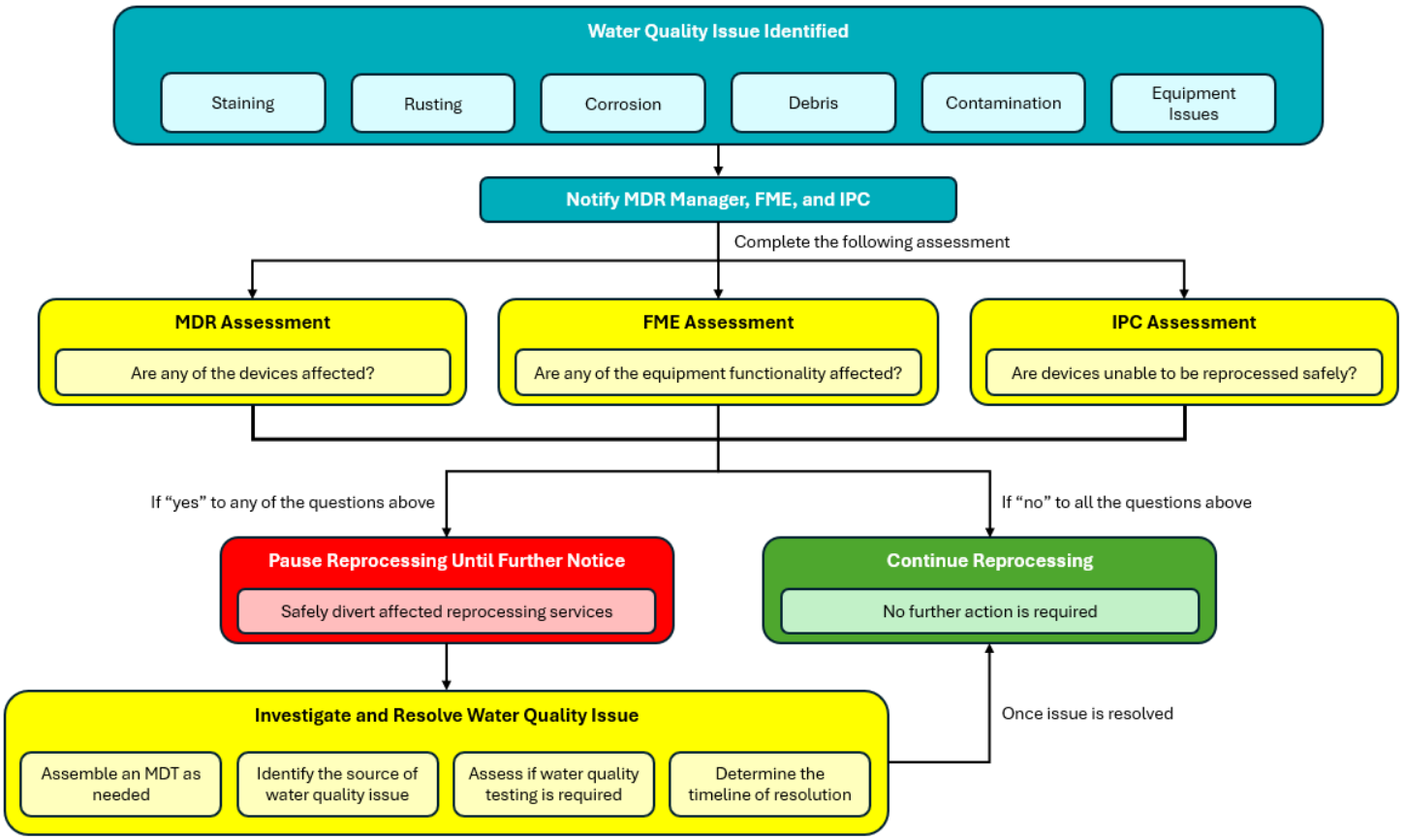
Definitions

None

Sources/References

None

Appendix A: Example of initial risk assessment



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