

Linen in Community-based Services

Most community-based services use single-use, disposable drapes, gowns and other linen. If your program uses reusable linen, these may include items such as:

- bed sheets;
- blankets;
- pillowcases;
- towels;
- cloth wraps for ice packs or hot packs;
- therapy cloths; and
- stretcher covers/sheets.

Linen should be:

- considered contaminated after use;
- handled as little as possible with minimum agitation and shaking;
- held away from the body to prevent contamination of personal clothing;
- discarded directly into garbage, or if reusable into a soiled linen bag;
- never placed on the floor.

Linen bags should be:

- of sufficient strength to hold the linen;
- leak resistant;
- filled no more than $\frac{3}{4}$ full;
- tied securely;
- discarded after each use if disposable;
- easy to launder and laundered after each use if reusable.

Soiled linen bags should be easily accessible at point of use.

All sharps must be removed prior to placing items in the laundry hamper or garbage.

Important considerations

- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to sort and process laundry as determined by soil level. Perform hand hygiene before donning PPE. Remember to follow the appropriate hand hygiene moments when doffing PPE.
- Handle clean linen with clean hands in a way that prevents contamination and ensures its cleanliness.
- Use separate carts for clean and dirty linens.
- Remove gross soiling (e.g., feces) from linen without agitation. Discard gross soil in garbage or toilet.
- Implement procedures to prevent sharps being discarded with the laundry.
- Follow detergent instructions for load size and load soiling.
- Follow manufacturer written instructions regarding amount of detergent and water temperature.
- Avoid overloading the machine.
- Use complete wash, rinse and dry cycles.
- Run an empty wash load with one cup of household chlorine bleach and water only (no clothes) after heavily soiled loads of laundry or if client is on additional precautions.
- Wash hands with soap and water after handling soiled linen.
- Follow manufacturer recommendations for the maintenance and cleaning of the washing machine and dryer. Keep a log these activities.
- Store clean linen apart from soiled.