Standard Operating Procedure

Transportation of Contaminated Items to the Reprocessing Area

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OBJECTIVES

To provide hospital staff direction on how to properly transport contaminated items/devices to the MDRD.

APPLICABILITY

Compliance with this document is required by all Alberta Health Services employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, students, volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of Alberta Health Services (including contracted service providers as necessary) working within Medical Device Reprocessing.

ELEMENTS

1. Initial handling and containment
   - 1.1 Immediately after use, the end user shall clean medical devices of gross soil if present and all sharps should be removed.
   - 1.2 The devices should be kept moist in a leak proof transport container. If delayed transport is anticipated, a towel moistened with water (not saline), foam, spray, or gel product specifically intended for this use should be used.
   - 1.3 Contaminated devices shall be transported in fully enclosed containers.
   - 1.4 Devices shall be delivered to the decontamination area of the MDR Department as soon as possible. Endoscopes must be manually cleaned within one hour of use.
2. On-site transportation
   - 2.1 Retrieval & transport
     - a) All personnel involved in the retrieval and transport of contaminated devices shall be trained and educated in basic infection prevention and control practices related to their responsibilities.
     - b) Contaminated items shall be transported in, fully enclosed, leak proof, and labelled containers.
     - c) Containers shall be of a design to allow decontamination after each use.
     - d) Sterile and clean devices shall NOT be transported together (e.g., on the same cart) with soiled devices due to the risk of cross contamination.

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2.2 Scheduling and routing

a) Retrieval and transport of contaminated devices shall be scheduled so that decontamination procedures can be initiated as soon as possible after use. Note: Organic matter and other residue that has dried are significantly more difficult to remove.

b) Transport routes shall expedite efficient delivery of contaminated devices to the decontamination area. Routes shall avoid high traffic and patient-care areas.

c) Contaminated devices shall **not** be transported through areas designated for storage of clean or sterile supplies.

2.3 Transport equipment

a) Equipment that is used to transport contaminated devices shall:

(i) Provide effective containment of blood and body fluids to prevent spillage.

(ii) Prevent damage to devices and facilitate safe loading and unloading of the medical devices.

b) All carts containing contaminated devices shall be so identified.

c) Open carts can be used if the contents are in an enclosed container on the carts.

d) Transport equipment that has been used for contaminated devices shall be decontaminated after delivery of its contents.

e) Transport equipment includes hand-propelled carts, motorized carts, and driver-operated vehicles.

Note: The healthcare facility should determine the scope of the decontamination based on the type of equipment involved, and on the level of containment within the cargo area of transportation equipment. In general, carts should be completely washed and decontaminated.

3. Off-site transportation

Procedures for off-site transportation of contaminated devices shall be in compliance with:

a) Sections 1 and 2 of this document as applicable.

b) Federal, provincial and municipal regulation for the transport of bio-hazardous waste.

3.2 Vehicle requirements

A vehicle's compartment for holding contaminated devices during transportation should be environmentally controlled at a temperature of 20 to 23°C and a relative humidity of 30 to 60%

a) Pneumatic suspension of the vehicle should be considered as a means to minimize damage to devices.

b) Vehicles should be routinely cleaned and maintained.

DEFINITIONS

None

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REFERENCES

- Non-Alberta Health Services documents
  - *Reusable & Single-Use Medical Devices Standards.* (Government of Alberta-Alberta Health) (September 2019).
  - *Canadian Medical Device Reprocessing.* (Canadian Standards Association) (CAN/CSA Z314-18)

VERSION HISTORY

Date	Action taken
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