Standard Operating Procedure

Transport of Contaminated and Reprocessed Medical Devices

Initial effective date: October 2017
Last updated: May 2026
Next review: May 2029

OBJECTIVES

To provide hospital staff directions on how to properly transport contaminated and reprocessed medical devices.

APPLICABILITY

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

ELEMENTS

1. Handling and transport of contaminated medical devices at the point-of-use

    1.1 Sort and separate contaminated reusable items so they can be reprocessed properly. Dispose of contaminated non-reusable items (such as single-use medical devices, sharps, and waste) according to applicable laws and regulations. For sharps and waste disposal, refer to Management of Sharps and Biomedical Waste Disposal SOP for more details.

    1.2 The end user must remove visible (gross) soil at the point of use as the first step immediately after the procedure, following the manufacturer's instructions for use (MIFU), before the item is transported for further manual or automated cleaning.

    1.3 Do not allow organic or inorganic soil to dry on the medical device. If reprocessing is delayed, use measures or products to keep soil from drying, hardening, or damaging the device. Examples include covering the device with a towel moistened with water (not saline), or using a foam, spray, or gel designed for this purpose.

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Original date: October 2017
Revised date: May 2026

1.4 Containment must follow Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) guidelines, Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) practices (including hand hygiene and the use of personal protective equipment or PPE), and other applicable SOPs.

1.5 Devices shall be delivered to the designated decontamination area of the MDRA as soon as possible.

2. On-site transportation of contaminated medical devices

2.1 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.

2.2 All personnel involved in the retrieval and transport of contaminated devices shall be trained and educated in basic IPC and MDR practices as they relate to their responsibilities.

2.3 Contaminated reusable critical and semi-critical medical devices shall be transported in waterproof covered, fully enclosed containers or closed carts that are:

a) Sturdy and leak-proof to provide effective containment of blood and body fluids and to prevent damage to devices and facilitate safe loading and unloading

b) Capable of being sealed or covered to prevent the risk of spillage and disease transmission

c) Labelled as containing contaminated medical devices, and

d) Reusable containers and transport carts shall be decontaminated after each use. If single-use containers are used, they shall be disposed of in accordance with the health care setting's waste management policy.

2.4 Collection and transport of contaminated medical devices shall be scheduled to facilitate prompt decontamination.

a) Routes shall expedite safe and efficient delivery of contaminated medical devices to the decontamination area.

b) Routes shall avoid high traffic and patient (client) care areas.

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

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d) A dedicated elevator for the transportation of contaminated medical devices should be used.

Note: The healthcare setting's service and public elevators are considered high-traffic areas.

3. Off-site transportation of contaminated medical devices
   - 3.1 Follow section 2 of this document as applicable.
   - 3.2 Vehicles and their compartments used for off-site transportation shall be:
     - a) Routinely cleaned and maintained.
     - b) Decontaminated if a spill occurs.
     - c) Monitored and controlled for humidity and temperature. Extremes of temperature and humidity, as well as large fluctuations, shall be prevented during the transportation of medical devices.
   - 3.3 To minimize damage to medical devices, the pneumatic suspension of the vehicles shall be assessed by the health care setting to ensure damage to medical devices does not occur during transport.
4. Handling and transportation of reprocessed medical devices
   - 4.1 Reprocessed items are covered and transported separately from soiled devices or linens.
   - 4.2 Distribution of clean and/or sterilized medical devices shall be achieved using clean and either enclosed or covered transportation carts, bins, and totes, or plastic bags.
   - 4.3 A container labelling system is in place to identify clean contents of transport containers.
   - 4.4 Containers used for transportation of sterile goods shall be cleaned and disinfected between uses.
   - 4.5 Clean and sterile medical devices shall not be transported through soiled areas (i.e., decontamination areas, soiled elevators, or soiled utility rooms).

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4.6 Scheduled distribution on public elevators should be timed during low-traffic times and not when garbage or soiled linen is being transported on the elevator.

DEFINITIONS

None

REFERENCES

- Non-Alberta Health Services documents
    - *Reusable & Single-Use Medical Devices Standards.* (Government of Alberta-Alberta Health) (September 2019).
    - *Canadian Medical Device Reprocessing in all Health Care Settings* (Canadian Standards Association) (CAN/CSA Z314-23)

VERSION HISTORY

Date	Action taken
October 2017	Initial approval
May 2026	Last updated
May 2029	Next revision date

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