

Water Release Quick Reference

Central Zone Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)

Purpose

This document is to support patient safety by outlining key elements in response to a water release event in an AHS healthcare facility.

This resource is for use by: Facilities Maintenance & Engineering (FME), Clinical Operations, Environmental Services (ES), Workplace Health & Safety (WHS) and Infection Prevention and Control (IPC).

Immediate actions

- Identify the source and implement measures to contain the water release, as per site process.
- Notify IPC.
- Identify department(s) and services impacted.
- Relocate impacted patients. Refer to [cohorting and overcapacity documents](#).
- Relocate clean and sterile supplies and equipment to a location that meets the [IPC Best Practice Guidelines](#).

Supplies and equipment contaminated during the water release must be cleaned and disinfected or sterilized according to the [Spaulding System](#). Items that cannot be cleaned and disinfected or sterilized must be discarded. Collaborate with clinical team and IPC on this.

- Inspect impacted areas including concealed spaces to determine the extent of moisture penetration.
 - Ensure a moisture meter is used to assess all porous surfaces for evidence of moisture.
 - Water intrusion determined to be clean water* may proceed with drying and dehumidifying; **however, time from intrusion to drying may not exceed 48 hours or the area must be abated.**
 - If the water intrusion is determined to be contaminated water*, abatement must be completed.
 - All water can become contaminated over time.

Mould testing is not recommended: The WHS Mould Prevention and Remediation Guidelines (2012 draft) and the Canadian Standards Association (CSA Z317.13-22) agree that monitoring viable microorganisms, including pathogenic mould and bacteria, is a complex process and the usefulness of the results are questionable.

Dry and dehumidify

- Fans and dehumidifiers may be used to circulate air and remove moisture, minimizing water spread through capillary action and preventing mould growth.
- Patients should be relocated prior to use of fans/dehumidifiers.
- Fans and dehumidifiers are clean and in working condition, maintained as per MIFU.
- Only place fans in closed or hoarded spaces to reduce the risk of spreading pathogens.
- Verify that the facility HVAC system does not recirculate air from areas impacted by the water release to other areas in the facility.

For more information contact: ipccenzadmin@ahs.ca

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Remediation and reconstruction

- FME shall complete a plan for remediation/reconstruction in collaboration with the Multidisciplinary Team (MDT)*.
- The plan should utilize the following tools:
 - [Infection Control Risk Assessment \(ICRA\)](#)
 - [Preventive Measures Tool](#)
 - [Infection Prevention & Control Construction Site Monitoring Tool](#)
 - [Pre-Construction Planning Guide](#)

Commissioning and reopening

- Facilitate a construction site clean* prior to hoarding removal
- [Environmental Services](#) shall complete the Return to Service Clean* prior to return to services
- ICP or designate to complete the [Infection Prevention and Control Post Construction Checklist](#)

Glossary*

Clean Water (Potable water): water that is safe for human consumption. Water that is provided by a waterworks system (private or municipal) and is used for drinking, cooking, dishwashing, or other domestic purposes requiring water that is suitable for human consumption. (EPEA).

Contaminated (Black/Grey) Water: water potentially contaminated by sewage or biological pollutants. Note: grey water release is managed in the same way as black water.

Multidisciplinary Team (MDT): a group comprising representatives from various disciplines in the healthcare facility that works with the project management team and others to ensure that the appropriate infection prevention and control measures are followed during construction activities.

Return to Service Cleaning: the thorough cleaning of a clinical space by ES staff, following construction and before the space is used for patient care, medical equipment, or the storage of clean or sterile supplies, to remove contaminating micro-organisms that could be acquired by subsequent occupants or staff.

Construction Clean: Job site is clear of dust, construction debris/equipment. Area has been cleaned, including HEPA vacuuming and/or wipe down of surfaces including hoarding to remove dust.

References

1. Canadian Standards Association. Z317.13-22; Infection control during construction, renovation and maintenance of health care facilities. Ontario: Canadian Standards Association, 2022. <https://subscriptions-techstreet-com.ahs.idm.oclc.org/>
2. [Grey water \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)
3. [WHS Mould Remediation Guide 2012 \(under revision\)](#)
4. [ES-CLN-27 Floods \(Black Water\)](#)
5. [ES-CLN-28 Floods \(Clean/Grey Water\)](#)

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