

Infection Control Assessment and Response (ICAR) Tool for General Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Across Settings

Section 3: Observation Form - Healthcare Laundry

Healthcare Laundry: This form is intended to guide observations of processes used in healthcare laundry whether it is performed on or offsite. This form is limited to healthcare textiles, examples of which include bed linens, towels, washcloths, patient gowns, and uniforms owned by the facility and used in patient or resident care. It is not intended to evaluate personal laundry, such as long-term care resident clothing.

Soiled linen poses a risk of exposure to infectious materials among personnel handling them. Suboptimal handling of laundered textiles may result in environmental contamination and may pose a risk to immunocompromised patients or residents.

Healthcare Laundry ICAR Interview Questions (Section 2 Module 9) and Observation Forms for other IPC topics (Section 3) are available on the ICAR web page: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthcare-associated-infections/php/toolkit/icar.html>



Observations of the laundry area

If laundry is performed onsite, collect these observations in the area where laundry is performed.

If laundry is performed offsite, collect these observations in the applicable areas of the facility (e.g., soiled laundry storage on units, soiled laundry transport area on dock, clean textile receiving area on dock, laundered textile staging area).

Observation 1

1. PPE is available and used by personnel sorting soiled laundry.

Yes

No

Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff

Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff

Personnel that sort soiled laundry should anticipate exposure to heavily soiled textiles and sharps. PPE should include impervious gowns and puncture resistant gloves. Sorting may result in dispersal of contaminants and eye protection and masks may also be needed.

2. Hand cleaning stations are available in the soiled area of the laundry area.

Yes

No

Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff

Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff

Ensure that laundry areas have handwashing facilities and products. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer or soap and water should be readily accessible.

3. Hand cleaning stations are available in the clean area of the laundry area.

Yes

No

Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff

Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff

Ensure that laundry areas have handwashing facilities and products. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer or soap and water should be readily accessible.

4. Laundry areas are free from items belonging to personnel (e.g., purses, bags, food).

Yes

No

Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff

Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff

The soiled laundry area is anticipated to be heavily contaminated, while the clean laundry area should be maintained in a manner that prevents environmental contamination of processed healthcare textiles. The area should be free from the personal belongings of healthcare personnel.

5. Soiled healthcare textiles are bagged or otherwise contained at the point of use.

Yes

No

Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff

Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff

Used linens should be handled in a manner that avoids contamination of the environment and healthcare personnel clothing. They should not be shaken, sorted, or prerinsed at the point of use.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/infection-control/hcp/environmental-control/laundry-bedding.html>

Notes

6. Soiled laundry carts are held in areas designated for soiled supplies until transport to the laundry facility/area.

- Yes
- No
- Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff
- Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff

Soiled laundry carts may be held near the loading dock and should be maintained in an area physically separate from clean supplies.

7. **If offsite laundry is performed:** The loading dock is clean and free from litter or evidence of infestations by birds or vermin.

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable (healthcare textiles are not processed offsite)
- Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff
- Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff

Heavy soiling at the receiving dock has been associated with outbreaks of fungal diseases associated with laundered healthcare textiles.

8. **If offsite laundry is performed:** Cleaned laundry that has been transported to the facility is packaged in a manner that prevents contact with the environment (e.g., impervious covers)

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable (healthcare textiles are not processed offsite)
- Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff
- Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff

Clean healthcare textiles should be packaged and transported in a manner that will ensure their cleanliness and protect them from dust and soil during interfacility loading, transport, and unloading.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/infection-control/hcp/environmental-control/laundry-bedding.html>

9. Carts used to transport, or store cleaned textiles are free from visible soil.

- Yes
- No
- Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff
- Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff

10. The clean textile staging area is free from dust, lint, or signs of water intrusion

- Yes
- No
- Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff
- Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff

Dust, lint, and water intrusion in the clean textile staging area has been associated with outbreaks of fungal infections associated with laundered textiles.

11. Laundered healthcare textiles are maintained in a manner that protects them from the environment (e.g., covered) during storage on patient/resident units.

- Yes
- No
- Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff
- Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff

Notes