



Ambulatory Clinic Policy and Procedure

Title: DECONTAMINATION OF REUSABLE INSTRUMENTS	Policy Number: EP 7.20
Regulation Reference: AAMI, CDC, The Joint Commission	Effective Date: 10/2023

Policy Statement:

It is the policy of the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC El Paso) to provide evidence based guidelines for staff performing pre-cleaning, cleaning and decontamination of endoscopes or instruments and to identify safety practices.

Scope and Distribution:

This policy applies and will be distributed to all Texas Tech Physicians of El Paso Ambulatory Clinics who use reusable instruments.

Definitions:

CLEANING: Is the removal of visible soil (e.g. organic and inorganic material) from objects and surfaces and normally is accomplished manually or mechanically using water with detergents or enzymatic products.

CRITICAL: Instruments or devices introduced directly into the human body or into contact with the bloodstream or normally sterile areas. Such devices should be sterilized (e.g. surgical instruments, biopsy forceps).

DECONTAMINATION: Removes pathogenic microorganisms from objects so they are safe to handle (i.e., safe in the context of being reasonably free from a risk of disease transmission).

DISINFECTION: Describes a process that eliminates many or all pathogenic microorganisms, except bacterial spores, on inanimate objects.

HIGH-LEVEL DISINFECTION (HLD): Destruction of all vegetative microorganisms, mycobacterium, small or non-lipid viruses, medium or lipid viruses, fungal spores, and some bacterial spores. Most high-level disinfectants have the ability to sterilize given sufficient exposure time.

INSTRUCTION FOR USE (IFU): Manufacturers explicit steps required for cleaning, disinfection, the level of disinfection required (e.g., sterilization, high level disinfection, low or intermediate level of disinfection), the frequency of disinfection, and the products which are compatible for use on device.

NON-CRITICAL: Instruments or devices that do not ordinarily touch the patient or touch only intact skin. These devices should be cleaned by disinfection. (E.g. bedrails, blood pressure cuffs).

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENTS (PPE): Accessories worn to minimize exposure to hazards that cause serious workplace injuries or illnesses.

PRE-CLEANING: Procedure done to remove and loosen debris before manual/automated cleaning is performed.

SEMI-CRITICAL: Instruments or devices that come into contact with intact skin or mucous membranes and do not ordinarily penetrate sterile tissue. These devices should receive at least High-level disinfection, (e.g. respiratory equipment, surgical mirror, flexible endoscopes).

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SPAULDING CLASSIFICATION: The classification system divides medical devices into categories based on the risk of infection involved with their use. This classification system is widely accepted and is used by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), epidemiologists, microbiologists, and professional medical organizations to help determine the degree of disinfection or sterilization required for various medical devices. Three categories of medical devices and their associated level of disinfection are recognized. Critical, semi-critical and Non-critical.

STERILE PROCESSING DEPARTMENT (SPD): Is the area where the orderly processing of medical and surgical instruments to protect patients from infections while minimizing risks to staff and preserving the value of the items being reprocessed.

STERILIZATION: Describes a process that destroys or eliminates all forms of microbial life and is carried out in health-care facilities by physical or chemical methods. There are several types of sterilization processes available, including steam under pressure, ozone, ethylene oxide gas, hydrogen peroxide gas plasma (e.g. Sterrad).

The decision on the reprocessing method must be made in accordance with material compatibility, manufacturer's recommendations and national standard and guidelines. For thermostable equipment, sterilization should be preferred to disinfection.

Procedure:

1. Assigned clinic employees are responsible for cleaning, decontamination, and preparing reusable medical devices used for patient care. These medical devices can then be taken to an off-site SPD's for HLD and/or sterilization. This process should be consistent throughout the campus. Written policy and procedure should be established and reviewed as needed.
2. Assigned employees will be trained in these practices during orientation. Ongoing educational programs and competencies will be implemented to foster a safe environment for patients and healthcare employees.
3. Assigned employees designated to clean and decontaminate reusable instruments will follow the corresponding guidelines on Attachments A through D of this policy.
4. The manufacturer's IFU will determine the Spaulding Classification category and how the medical device will be decontaminated prior to HLD and/or sterilization. Steam sterilization is preferable to high-level disinfection due to storage and usage limitations present in clinic areas.
5. Each clinic will have a list of medical devices that are used to performed clinical procedures and also include its' Spaulding Classification.
6. Step-by-step instructions for instrument reprocessing should be displayed/available in the reprocessing area. These instructions and any revision to them should be approved by the Infection Control Nurse.
7. Safety considerations - Only individuals trained in cleaning, decontamination, and handling of chemical solutions should reprocess instruments. Work should be conducted in a well-ventilated area to prevent formation of vapor. Users should refer to Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for first aid measures.

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References

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