

Laundry Procedures when Dealing with an Outbreak

Collection of Contaminated Linens



- Staff should use standard precautions and personal protective equipment (examples: gloves, gowns and masks).
- Do not shake contaminated linens.
- Hold contaminated linen and laundry bags away from his/her clothing/body during transport.
- Bag/contain contaminated linens where they are collected, and sort/rinse only in the contaminated laundry area (double bagging of linen is only recommended if outside of the bag is visibly contaminated or is observed to be wet on the outside of the bag).
- Transporting contaminated and clean linens in separate carts; if this is not possible the contaminated linen cart should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected per facility protocol before being used to move clean linens. Clean linens should be transported by methods that ensure the linen will not be contaminated by dust and soil and remains hygienically clean.
- If a laundry chute is in use, laundry bags should be securely closed with no loose items.

Processing Linens in The On Premise Laundry Room

Detergents and water physically remove many microorganisms from linen through dilution during the wash cycle. An effective way to destroy microorganisms in laundry items is through hot water washing at temperatures above 160°F for 25 minutes. Alternatively, low temperature washing at 71-77°F plus a 125 parts-per-million chlorine bleach rinse has been found to be effective and comparable to high temperature cycles.

Many laundry items are composed of materials that cannot withstand a chlorine bleach rinse and remain intact. ***The chlorine bleach rinse is not required for all laundry items processed in low temperature washing environments due to the availability of modern laundry detergents that are able to produce hygienically clean laundry without the presence of chlorine bleach.*** The Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation defines the term “hygienically clean” as free of pathogens in sufficient numbers to cause human illness.

Drying linens at a temperature of 160°F for 25 minutes will also aid in the destruction of microorganisms.



- Maintain and/or use washing machines and dryers according to the manufacturers’s instructions.
- Use laundry chemicals according to manufacturer’s instructions.
- Wash items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturers; instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely.
- Dirty laundry that has been in contact with an ill person can be washed with other people’s items.

For more information, please contact your Santec representative.