



Sterile Supplies Management Procedure

Procedure Number
WCDHB-IC-0035

Version Nos:
5

1. Purpose

This Procedure outlines the process for the management of sterile supplies by West Coast District Health Board (WCDHB) staff members.

2. Application

This Procedure is to be followed by all clinical staff throughout WCDHB.

3. Definitions

There are no definitions associated with this Procedure:

4. Responsibilities

For the purposes of this Procedure:

The Clinical Nurse Specialist – Infection Control is required to:

- oversee all aspects of this Procedure
- monitor the performance of WCDHB staff members in relation to this Procedure;

Staff Members are required to:

- ensure they abide by the requirements of this Procedure;
- abide by all WCDHB Infection Control Policy and Procedures;
- abide by all WCDHB Health and Safety Policy and Procedure.

5. Resources Required

This Procedure requires:

- i) Storage areas

6. Process

- 1.00 Sterile supplies are to be stored in an area separate from other supplies, such as food, solutions, unsterile products, and cleaning materials
- 1.01 Storage areas should be free from dust, insects, and vermin and are easily cleaned.
- 1.02 For open shelving, all items shall be stored above the floor 250mm (25cm) and from ceiling fixtures by at least 440mm (44cm) and protected from sunlight
- 1.03 Storage containers, trolleys and cupboards shall be kept clean, dry and in good condition.
- 1.04 Cardboard boxes should not be used as storage containers for items sterilized in the WCDHB Facility as they are porous, cannot be cleaned adequately and may harbour organisms.
- 1.05 Commercial dispenser boxes shall not be topped up or reused.



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- 1.06 Surfaces i.e. walls, floors, ceiling lights and work surfaces shall-
- Be constructed so that difficult –to clean corners are minimized: and
 - Be non- porous, smooth, and capable of being easily cleaned
 - Overhead lighting should be fitted so as to minimize dust entrapment.
- 1.07 Temperatures within storage areas should range from 18C- 22C with a relative humidity ranging from 35%-69% Air conditioning and ventilating conditions shall be in accordance with AS 1668.2.
- 2.00 Access To Stored Items**
- 2.01 Access to the sterile storage area shall be restricted to those who-
- have been given adequate training in handling sterilized items
 - do not have discharging or open wounds, abrasions or scaling skin disorders, and
 - have washed and dried their hands.
- 2.02 A package is considered contaminated when it is:
- incorrectly wrapped and or
 - damaged or opened and or
 - comes in contact with a wet surface i.e. floor, sink and or
 - has exceeded its expiry date and or
 - has no indication of being through a sterilisation process and or
 - comes in contact with the floor or an obviously dusty surface
- 2.03 Care is to be taken to prevent contamination of sterile supplies from:
- Dirty hands
 - Incorrect cleaning procedure of storage areas
 - Moisture or condensation
 - Vermin or insects
 - Damaged packaging materials
- 2.04 Shelf life is a term to denote the period during which an article is considered sterile if cared for in the recommended way. Each sterile product has an expiry date to ensure stock is rotated and used within the recommended time frames. Monthly checking of expiry dates is to be undertaken to ensure that out of date stock is not available for use. Factors influencing shelf life of sterile items include storage and handling conditions and packaging.
- 2.05 Shelf life time frames for sterile items are as follows:
- Paper/non woven materials :} 6 months
 - Laminate packaging (paper and film wrap) :} 6 months
 - Double laminate packaging :} 6 months
- 2.06 Sterile items are to rotate on a last in last out basis for stock use. The expiry date is to be the indicator for stock rotation
- 2.07 Sterile items are to be stored in such a way that it is easily accessible for use.
- 2.08 Sterile items that have expired are sent to CSSD for reprocessing.



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- 2.09 Storage areas for sterile items are to be cleaned weekly as follows:
- i) Remove all sterile products from the area to be cleaned, place on trolley (never on floor)
 - ii) Use a damp cloth; wipe the shelf, taking care not to wipe dust particles onto other sterile items.
 - iii) Dry with a separate cloth, replace items.
 - iv) Check for damaged packets and products past their expiry date and replace as necessary.

7. Precautions And Considerations

- ➔ Sterile supplies are to be stored in an area separate from other supplies
- ➔ Storage areas should be free from dust, insects, vermin, and are easily cleaned.
- ➔ Sterile items that have expired are to be sent to CSSD for resterilisation.

8. References

New Zealand Standard – Infection Control (NZS 8142:2000)

9. Related Documents

WCDHB Health and Safety Procedure Manual

WCDHB Infection Control Procedure Manual

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