

Sterilization Standards: Are You in Compliance?

Compliance Checklist:

- Does your ventilation system produce at least 10 air exchanges (from clean adjoining areas to relatively soiled areas to outside exhaust or a partial recirculating system) per hour? (3.3.3.3)
- Do your clinic personnel wear heavy-duty rubber gloves, fluid-resistant gowns, protective eyewear, a high-efficiency filtration mask and shoe covers during cleaning and decontamination of instruments? (4.5.2)
- Are your sterilizer loads biologically monitored at least once a week? (7.5.3)
- Are your sterilization packages affixed with steam-sterilizer indicator tape, indicating labels or an indicating printed legend? (7.4.3.1)
- Are sterilized instruments awaiting use wrapped and labeled with a lot control number containing the date of processing, the cycle number and the sterilizer number (if more than one sterilizer is in use)? (7.2.1)
- Are load records—including date and time of cycle, general description of the contents of the load, exposure time and temperature, name or initials of operator, results of biological indicators, and chemical-indicator results—recorded and maintained? (7.2.2)

NOTE: This checklist is based on an excerpt from the AAMI Standards and Recommended Practices. For a full standards document, please visit www.aami.org.

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Infection Control: A Real Issue in Healthcare

“Restaurants in New York are inspected, without prior notice, once a year ... Why aren't hospitals held to the same rigorous standard? The consequences of inadequate hygiene are far deadlier ... Physicians' offices are not inspected at all.”

—McCaughey B. Our unsanitary hospitals.
The Wall Street Journal. November 29, 2007.

“An outbreak of hepatitis C at a Nevada clinic may represent 'the tip of the iceberg' of safety problems at clinics around the country, according to the head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.”

—CDC: hepatitis C in Nev. could be 'tip of iceberg.'
USA Today. March 3, 2008.

“A study by the University of Minnesota of stabilizers made by Medtronic Inc. found ... a majority of reprocessed devices had corroded parts and traces of human hair and protein, bringing into question the effectiveness of the reprocessing efforts.”

—Landro L. Hospitals reuse medical devices to lower costs. *The Wall Street Journal*.
March 19, 2008.

“... publication in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) of a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) study ... indicated that MRSA caused more than 94,000 life-threatening infections and nearly 19,000 deaths in the United States in 2005, most of them associated with healthcare settings.”

—Warye KL. The changing paradigm of infection prevention and control.
Biomedical Instrumentation & Technology.
January/February 2008.

“Safety concerns prompted the Memphis Veterans Medical Center to send letters Friday to 1,725 men who underwent prostate biopsies, offering them screenings for hepatitis and the AIDS virus. The letters went out after a routine safety review at another VA facility raised concern about whether a piece of the equipment used for prostate biopsies was being adequately cleaned.”

—Powers M. Prostate biopsy device may be contaminated. *Commercial Appeal*.
April 22, 2006.