Part of
The Revised Healthcare
Cleaning Manual
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Welcome to the Revised Healthcare Cleaning Manual

The Revised Healthcare Cleaning Manual has been designed to help every NHS Trust meet its obligation to aid the delivery of high-quality, effective and safe healthcare in clean premises that support the control of healthcare associated infections and make a positive contribution to healthcare outcomes.

The Revised Healthcare Cleaning Manual is intended as a resource for the Trust Board member or senior manager with responsibility for cleanliness and for all managers and staff with responsibilities for cleaning. The Manual is applicable to all healthcare settings including hospitals, ambulances and primary care.

The aim of the Manual is to provide guidance on cleaning techniques and best practice advice on defining responsibilities, scheduling work, measuring outcomes, reporting and driving improvements.

It is anticipated that healthcare providers will respond to the publication of this Manual by reviewing existing policies and practice relating to cleanliness.

This Manual is available for download from http://www.npsa.nhs.uk/cleaning
Foreword

The cleanliness of healthcare premises is an important component in the provision of clean safe care. The NHS Constitution clearly sets out that patients have a right to be treated in an organisation that meets the required levels of safety and quality. The NHS has further pledged that services will be provided in a clean and safe environment that is fit for purpose and based on national best practice. Whilst there have been significant improvements in the cleanliness of our healthcare premises, there is still room for improvement.

The Care Quality Commission will continue the inspection programme to ensure that healthcare providers are meeting the requirements of regulation with respect to healthcare associated infections. In order to meet these requirements, healthcare providers will be expected to provide and maintain a clean and appropriate environment that facilitates the prevention and control of healthcare associated infection. Following the guidance in this manual may be of assistance in providing assurance that a healthcare provider meets these requirements.

This guidance should be used as a starting point from which practitioners and managers can develop their own local environmental cleanliness policies. When read in conjunction with the National Specifications for Cleanliness, this guidance can help healthcare providers identify standards of cleanliness and what systems and processes they need to put in place to deliver and monitor those standards.

The National Patient Safety Agency commissioned the Association of Healthcare Cleaning Professionals to lead the review of this Manual and revise the guidance to reflect the modern NHS. We have worked with a variety of stakeholders with expertise in cleaning, infection control, nursing and emergency care. We are grateful to all those involved in the revision of this guidance for providing their expertise, time and commitment to this work.

Martin Fletcher
Chief Executive
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7.1.7 Cleaning with Pressurised Steam

The use of steam cleaning machines, as part of the overall cleaning regime to be used in healthcare buildings, is increasing.

There is evidence for the effectiveness of this technology. “An Integrated Approach to Hospital Cleaning: Microfibre Cloth and Steam Cleaning Technology” (Department of Health, June 2007) references some studies and further information is now widely available.

Steam cleaning uses superheated dry steam delivered under pressure. It has a dual cleaning and disinfectant function: the high temperature of the steam is very efficient at killing micro-organisms, while the pressurised steam loosens dirt and greasy deposits, which are then pulled into the machine using vacuum suction.

It is suggested that correct use of the machines is at least as effective as conventional cleaning at removing soiling from surfaces, and will be better than conventional cleaning at cleaning crevices and other difficult to reach surfaces.

Correct training in the use of steam cleaners is particularly important. As soon as steam is released into the atmosphere for cleaning it will rapidly, in less than one second, condense into minute water droplets. Through evaporation, the water droplets will cool very quickly. Moist heat above 80°C will kill all hospital pathogens except bactericidal spores. If the steam nozzle is too far away from the surface being treated, or passes over it too quickly, this temperature will not be reached. The achievement of an effective level of performance, therefore, depends entirely on the skill and training of the user, in ensuring that the steam nozzle remains the optimum distance from the treated surface and that each part of the surface receives optimum length of exposure. Introduction of steam cleaning, therefore, must be accompanied by a rigorous programme of training, working closely with the manufacturer, (see section 7).

Commercially available steam cleaning machines vary considerably in quality and effectiveness. Careful consideration should be given to the relative merits of products on the market.
Task

CLEANING WITH PRESSURISED STEAM – ROUTINE CLEANING

Equipment and materials required:

- colour-coded, heat resistant gauntlet gloves suitable for chemical resistance and complying with the PPE Directive (89/686/EEC);
- eye goggles;
- colour-coded cloths;
- pressurised steam cleaner;
- steam cleaner accessories;
- warning signs.

Method

1. Plan work route and when necessary, temporarily move items that may obstruct you to a new, safe location. Identify a suitable drain for disposal of the dirty water.
2. Wash hands and put on heat resistant gauntlet gloves and eye goggles.
3. Display warning signs.
4. Fill the steam cleaner with clean water, following the manufacturer's instructions and your training.
5. Attach the general purpose nozzle head.
6. Unwind the cable, plug into a mains socket and turn on the machine.
7. Wait for the water to reach the required temperature, following the manufacturer's instructions and your training. This will normally take between 4 and 8 minutes depending on the machine used.
8. When the machine is ready to use, begin cleaning. Starting with the highest areas and moving to the lowest, clean ledges and surfaces in a 1-2 metre section, taking care not to overstretch. Use the suction cleaning function following the manufacturer’s instructions and your training.
9. Repeat the process, moving systematically around the room section by section.
10. When completed, turn off the machine, fit the crevice cleaning attachment, or the smallest directional nozzle and turn the machine back on. Clean the joint between the wall and the floor and other awkward areas, which have resisted the general steam cleaning, moving systematically around the room as before.
11. When completed, turn off the machine, fit the floor cleaning attachment and turn the machine back on. Clean the main surface of the floor, beginning at the point furthest from the door and progressing towards it.
12. With dry hands, remove the plug from the mains socket and rewind the electricity cable.
13. Empty the dirty water tank in identified drain.
14. Collect all accessories.
15. Clean the steam cleaner and accessories.
16. Store the cleaned equipment safely and tidily in the secure storage area, segregated according to colour-coding where appropriate.
17. Return any items moved to their original positions.
18. Remove gloves and wash hands.
Task

CLEANING WITH PRESSURISED STEAM – DEEP CLEAN OF EQUIPMENT

Note: This method statement is for the detailed cleaning of multiple pieces of moveable equipment, such as commodes, wheeled trolleys and drip stands, carried out in a suitable cleaning area. This will normally be done as part of planned periodic deep cleaning. To maximise efficiency, the operative carrying out the steam cleaning should remain in place while colleagues transport items to be cleaned to and from their normal locations. Care should be taken to segregate clean and dirty items.

The same basic method is suitable for cleaning of single items of equipment in their normal locations.

Equipment and materials required:

- colour-coded, heat resistant gauntlet gloves suitable for chemical resistance and complying with the PPE Directive (89/686/EEC);
- eye goggles;
- colour-coded cloths;
- pressurised steam cleaner;
- steam cleaner accessories;
- warning signs.

Method

1. Identify a suitable work area, close to a drain for disposal of the dirty water. Designate and sign areas for items awaiting cleaning and cleaned items, and ensure that these are kept separate. The area for cleaned items should be well away from the area where cleaning is to be performed.
2. Wash hands and put on heat resistant gauntlet gloves and eye goggles.
3. Display warning signs.
4. Fill the steam cleaner with clean water, following the manufacturer’s instructions and your training.
5. Attach the general purpose nozzle head.
6. Unwind the cable, plug into a mains socket and turn on the machine.
7. Wait for the water to reach the required temperature, following the manufacturer’s instructions and your training. This will normally take between 4 and 8 minutes depending on the machine used.
8. When the machine is ready to use, begin cleaning. Clean the main surfaces, undersides and edges of the item of equipment.
9. When completed, turn off the machine, fit the crevice cleaning attachment, or the smallest directional nozzle, and turn the machine back on. Carefully clean any crevices or awkward joints, using the suction function. Repeated cleans may be necessary where there is heavy soiling. Repeat the process for the wheels and for any other areas which have resisted general steam cleaning.
10. Move the item of equipment to the identified area for cleaned items.
11. Move onto the next item of equipment, and repeat points 5 to 10.
12. When all items are completed, with dry hands remove the plug from the mains socket and rewind the electricity cable.
13. Empty the dirty water tank in identified drain.
14. Collect all accessories.
15. Clean the steam cleaner and accessories.
16. Store the cleaned equipment safely and tidily in the secure storage area, segregated according to colour-coding where appropriate.
17. Remove gloves and wash hands.