

### Introduction

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NSW Health is committed to ensuring the health and safety of all patients and visitors in NSW public healthcare facilities (facilities) and providing a safe and healthy working environment for all staff.

Cleanliness of the healthcare environment is one of the key ways to prevent patients, visitors and staff acquiring a healthcare associated infection. A clean healthcare environment is essential to the safety, dignity and comfort of patients.

Keeping healthcare facilities clean is everybody's responsibility. A clean healthcare facility reflects a culture of concern for patients and respect for those working in and visiting the facility.

*Environmental Cleaning Policy PD2012\_061*<sup>1</sup> establishes environmental cleaning standards for NSW public healthcare facilities, and sets out the overarching roles and responsibilities of all staff.

The Environmental Cleaning Standard Operating Procedures provide detailed best practice guidelines for all aspects of environmental cleaning in healthcare facilities. NSW public healthcare facilities should comply with the guidelines set out in these Standard Operating Procedures.

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NSW public healthcare facilities should comply with the guidelines set out in the Standard Operating Procedures.

The Standard Operating Procedures is updated continually to incorporate new procedures and products. Therefore, printed copies of this document or part thereof should not be relied upon as a current reference document. Staff should always refer to the electronic copy for the latest version.

The actual allocation of resources and the actual frequency of cleaning may vary according to locally determined need. The cleaning procedures for specific settings and activities are set out in Module 3.

The timings given for various cleaning procedures or tasks in Modules 3 and 4 are approximate and are to be used as a guide only. The actual cleaning time for a specific task is likely to vary depending on the particular circumstances.

It is essential that cleaning equipment is fit for its purpose, easy-to-use, well-maintained and regularly reviewed.

All staff performing cleaning must be trained in infection prevention and control principles and the correct use of personal protective equipment.<sup>1</sup> They should receive appropriate training prior to being allocated to specific cleaning tasks. Continued refresher training is essential to maintaining cleaning standards.

Prior to purchasing equipment or refurbishing a facility their cleaning requirements should be considered.

The Standard Operating Procedures are set out in eight modules that cover the issues required to implement an environmental cleaning program in a healthcare facility. These modules are:

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- ✦ Module 1: Frequency of cleaning
- ✦ Module 2: Personal protective equipment
- ✦ Module 3: Work procedures for cleaning
- ✦ Module 4: Specialised patient conditions
- ✦ Module 5: Cleaning equipment
- ✦ Module 6: Cleaning agents
- ✦ Module 7: Evaluation of cleaning
- ✦ Module 8: Supporting documents

### Definition of Terms

<b>ALCOHOL BASED HAND RUB (ABHR)</b>	An alcohol-containing preparation which is TGA registered, designed for application to the hands in order to reduce the number of viable organisms with maximum efficacy and speed. <sup>2</sup>
<b>BODY SUBSTANCE</b>	Includes any human bodily secretion or substance other than blood. <sup>3</sup> For the purpose of these Standard Operating Procedures, body substances also exclude sweat.
<b>BURNISH</b>	Polish using a machine.
<b>CLEAN</b>	To leave without visible and non-visible soil, dust or other extraneous materials and leave in working order.
<b>CLEANING</b>	The removal of visible soil, inorganic and organic contamination from devices or a surface, using either the physical action of scrubbing with a surfactant/detergent and water, or with appropriate chemical agents. <sup>4</sup>
<b>CLINICAL WASTE</b>	Any waste resulting from medical, nursing, dental, pharmaceutical, skin penetration and other related clinical activity, being waste that has the potential to cause injury, infection or offence, and includes waste containing any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. human tissue (other than hair, teeth and nails)</li> <li>b. bulk body fluids or blood</li> <li>c. visibly blood-stained body fluids, materials or equipment</li> <li>d. laboratory specimens or cultures</li> <li>e. animal tissue, carcasses or other waste from animals used in medical research,</li> </ul> but does not include any such waste that has been treated by a method approved in writing by the Director-General of the Department of Health. <sup>5</sup>
<b>CYTOTOXIC WASTE</b>	Any substance contaminated with any residues or preparations that contain materials that are toxic to cells principally through their action on cell reproduction. <sup>4</sup>
<b>DEBRIS</b>	Carelessly discarded refuse, litter, rubble or wreckage. Includes crisp packets, drink cans and bottles, chewing gum, rubbish, cigarette butts, litter, adhesive tape, grit, lime scale. <sup>6</sup>
<b>DECONTAMINATION</b>	Use of physical or chemical means to remove, inactivate, or destroy pathogens on a surface or item so that they are no longer capable of transmitting infectious particles and the surface or item is rendered safe for handling, use, or disposal. <sup>7</sup>
<b>DETERGENT SOLUTION</b>	A detergent product which is intended to be used in the cleaning of surfaces or other medical devices diluted with water as per manufacturer's instructions.

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<b>DETERGENT WIPE</b>	A TGA approved cleaning wipe for surfaces and implements/equipment
<b>DIRT</b>	Any unclean substance and includes mud, smudges, soil, graffiti, mould, fingerprints, ingrained dirt, scum.
<b>DISCHARGE CLEANING</b>	Cleaning of a room following transfer/discharge of a patient.
<b>DISINFECTANT</b>	A TGA registered disinfectant chemical product that is intended for use in disinfection of surfaces or medical devices. <sup>7</sup>
<b>DISINFECTION</b>	Destruction of pathogenic and other kinds of micro-organisms by physical or chemical means. <sup>7</sup>
<b>DUST</b>	Fine particles of matter, includes dust, lint, powder, fluff, cobweb.
<b>DOUBLE CLEAN</b>	Cleaning procedure consisting of cleaning with neutral detergent followed over with a TGA registered disinfectant e.g. bleach or hospital grade disinfectant. This process must involve either: a 2-step clean, which involves a physical clean using detergent solution followed by use of a chemical disinfectant; or a 2-in-1 clean in which a combined detergent/disinfectant wipe or solution is used and mechanical/manual cleaning action is involved.
<b>DUAL PURPOSE CLEANER/DISINFECTANT</b>	A product that combines a detergent cleaning effect by surfactants and also contains a biocide. The product must be TGA registered. Dual purpose cleaner/disinfectants are designed to eliminate the need for separate cleaning and disinfection processes to be carried out consecutively by combining them into a single process.
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>	The space which surrounds or encompasses a person, object, building or community.
<b>ELEMENT</b>	The surface, article or fixture that needs to be cleaned. <sup>15</sup>
<b>FUNCTIONAL AREA</b>	Any location in a health facility that requires cleaning. <sup>15</sup>
<b>FLAMMABLE</b>	Capable of being easily ignited: readily combustible.
<b>FLUID RESISTANT GOWN/APRON</b>	A gown/apron made of impervious material (not cloth) that provides a barrier to opportunities for transmission of pathogens in healthcare settings. <sup>8</sup>
<b>HAND HYGIENE</b>	The process of hand cleansing with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ABHR including waterless alcohol-based hand solution, gel or foam,</li> <li>• Antiseptic handwash and running water,</li> <li>• Surgical hand scrub and running water, or</li> <li>• Plain liquid soap and running water.<sup>9</sup></li> </ul>
<b>HEALTHCARE ASSOCIATED INFECTION</b>	An infection that develops in a patient who is cared for in any setting where healthcare is delivered and is related to receiving healthcare (i.e. was not incubating or present at the time healthcare was provided). <sup>10</sup>
<b>HEALTHCARE FACILITY</b>	For the purpose of these Standard Operating Procedures, a healthcare facility is any facility or service that delivers healthcare services. Healthcare facilities include hospitals, multi-purpose services, aged care facilities, emergency services, ambulatory care services, Aboriginal Medical Services, community health services, and community based health services such as needle and syringe programs.
<b>HYGIENE</b>	The process of reducing the number of vegetative organisms on a surface to a point where cross infection from microbial fouling will not occur from normal re-use of equipment, facilities or services.
<b>IMMUNO-SUPPRESSED</b>	Having an immune system that has been impaired by disease or treatment or as defined by the local Infectious Disease service.
<b>INFECTION</b>	The results of the presence of harmful micro-organisms (e.g. bacterium, fungus or virus), in the body. Infections can be acute or chronic. <sup>11</sup>
<b>ICP</b>	Infection Prevention and Control Professional

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<b>ISOLATION AREA</b>	A room or area in which patients are isolated or cohorted who are known or suspected of having a condition for which transmission based precautions are required to prevent healthcare associated infections.
<b>INPUTS</b>	Are the resources used to produce and deliver outputs. Inputs may include staff, equipment or materials.
<b>MICROORGANISMS</b>	Animals or plants of microscopic size. As used in healthcare, generally refers to bacteria, fungi, viruses, and bacterial spores. <sup>12</sup>
<b>MULTI-RESISTANT ORGANISMS (MRO)</b>	In general, bacteria that are resistant to one or more classes of antimicrobial agents and usually are resistant to all but one or two commercially available antimicrobial agents). <sup>6</sup>
<b>MUST</b>	Indicates a mandatory action. <sup>13</sup>
<b>NEUTRAL</b>	A solution containing neither acid nor alkali: a solution which acid has been fully neutralised by alkali to pH 7.0.
<b>OUTBREAK</b>	Where the incidence of infections or colonisations is greater than the expected rate within a specific area over a defined period of time. <sup>11</sup>
<b>PATIENT CARE AREA</b>	The room or area in which patient care takes place.
<b>PATIENT SURROUNDINGS</b>	The space temporarily occupied by an individual patient and the items within it. This will vary between settings and will contain: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Surfaces frequently touched by the patient occupying that space (e.g. bed, bedside table, chair); and</li> <li>2. Surfaces frequently touched by the staff member providing patient care (e.g. monitors, knobs).</li> </ol>
<b>PERIODIC</b>	Are those tasks additional to, but in conjunction with, routine tasks, e.g. scrubbing floors, glass cleaning. The frequency of these tasks is determined by the organisation dependent on needs.
<b>PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)</b>	A variety of barriers used alone or in combination to protect mucous membranes, skin, and clothing from contact with infectious agents. PPE includes gloves, masks, respirators, protective eyewear, face shields, and gowns/aprons.
<b>pH</b>	A measure of the acidity or alkalinity of a solution, numerically equal to 7 for neutral solutions, increasing with increasing alkalinity and decreasing with increasing acidity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0 = maximum acidity</li> <li>3 = moderate acidity</li> <li>7 = neutral</li> <li>11 = moderate alkalinity</li> <li>14 = maximum alkalinity</li> </ul>
<b>PROJECT</b>	Are those tasks undertaken in accordance with a planned cleaning program or on a needs basis, e.g. wall washing, carpet shampooing etc.
<b>PUBLIC HEALTH ORGANISATION</b>	For the purpose of these Standard Operating Procedures, a public health organisation is: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A Local Health District/Network,</li> <li>2. A statutory health corporation that provides patient/client services, or</li> <li>3. An affiliated health organisation in respect of its recognised establishment or recognised service that provides patient/client services.</li> </ol>
<b>RESEAL</b>	Application of a sealer finish to floor surface to protect and extend serviceable life of floor.
<b>ROOM TYPES</b>	Are subsets of functional areas. For example, on a ward these could be bedded bays and sanitary areas. This allows cleaning managers the opportunity to more closely audit and manage standards in specific parts of functional areas.

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<b>ROUTINE</b>	Is a frequency of cleaning that is performed in functional areas on a predetermined basis set by management according to area usage and the need for cleanliness.
<b>SEALER FINISH</b>	Polymer base liquid that seals the floor and puts a protective coating on the top.
<b>SERVICE CLEAN</b>	Is a frequency of cleaning that is performed in functional areas daily or on a predetermined basis set by management according to area usage and the need for cleanliness.
<b>SHOULD</b>	Indicates a recommended action that should be followed unless there are sound reasons for taking a different course of action. <sup>13</sup>
<b>SOIL</b>	Visible or non-visible dirt or debris, which may protect, harbour or assist the growth of microorganisms. Includes organic matter, organic substances, residual soil, inorganic matter, blood and body substances. <sup>14</sup>
<b>SOLVENT</b>	A solution capable of dissolving chemicals; commonly means liquid other than water that is used for cleaning, i.e. methylated spirits, mineral turpentine, trichloroethylene, white spirits etc. Solvents of these types may be either very flammable or quite poisonous.
<b>SPILLAGE</b>	Includes any liquid, tea stains, sticky substances.
<b>STAFF</b>	For the purpose of these Standard Operating Procedures, staff refers to any person working in any capacity within NSW, including contractors, students and volunteers.
<b>STANDARD PRECAUTIONS</b>	Precautions designed to reduce the risk of transmission of microorganisms from both recognised and unrecognised sources of infection in healthcare settings. Standard Precautions apply to all patients receiving care in health organisations regardless of their diagnosis or presumed infection status. <sup>7</sup>
<b>STERILIZATION</b>	Use of a physical or chemical procedure to destroy all microorganisms including substantial numbers of resistant bacterial spores.
<b>STRIPPING</b>	Remove old sealer from a floor to prepare it for resealing with sealer finish to restore gloss.
<b>TERMINAL CLEANING</b>	Double cleaning of a room following transfer/discharge of a patient where transmission based precautions were required.
<b>THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION (TGA)</b>	Division of the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing responsible for regulating therapeutic goods including medicines, medical devices, blood and blood products.
<b>TOXIC</b>	Poisonous.
<b>TRANSMISSION BASED PRECAUTIONS (FORMERLY ADDITIONAL PRECAUTIONS)</b>	Are designed for patients known or suspected to be infected/colonised with pathogens for which additional precautions beyond Standard Precautions are needed to interrupt transmission in healthcare settings. <sup>7</sup>
<b>UTILITY PAD (AKA DOODLE BUG)</b>	Long handled scouring pad holder.

<sup>1</sup> NSW Health Environmental Cleaning Policy PD2012\_061  
[http://www0.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2012/PD2012\\_061.html](http://www0.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2012/PD2012_061.html)

<sup>2</sup> Hand Hygiene Australia. *5 Moments for Hand Hygiene*. November 2010.  
[http://www.hha.org.au/UserFiles/file/Manual/HHAManual\\_2010-11-23.pdf](http://www.hha.org.au/UserFiles/file/Manual/HHAManual_2010-11-23.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Health Practitioner Regulation (New South Wales) Regulation 2010.  
<http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/sessionalview/sessional/sr/2010-333.pdf>

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<sup>4</sup> CDC and the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee (2003) Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Health-Care Facilities.

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5210a1.htm>

<sup>5</sup> NSW Government, 2010, Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 No 156.

<http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/viewtop/inforce/act+156+1997+FIRST+0+N/>

<sup>6</sup> National Patient Safety Agency. The national specifications for cleanliness in the NHS: a framework for setting and measuring performance. NHS, 2007.

<http://www.nrls.npsa.nhs.uk/resources/patient-safety-topics/environment/?entryid45=59818>

<sup>7</sup> NHMRC (2010) Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare. Commonwealth of Australia <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/cd33syn.htm>

<sup>8</sup> NSW Health Infection Control Policy PD2007\_036.

[http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2007/PD2007\\_036.html](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2007/PD2007_036.html)

<sup>9</sup> NSW Health Hand Hygiene Policy PD2010\_058.

[http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2010/PD2010\\_058.html](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2010/PD2010_058.html)

<sup>10</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee, 2007, *2007 Guideline for Isolation Precautions: Preventing Transmission of Infectious Agents in Healthcare Settings* <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/pdf/isolation2007.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> NSW Health Infection Control Policy: Prevention and Management of Multi-Resistant Organisms (MRO) PD2007\_084.

[http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2007/PD2007\\_084.html](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2007/PD2007_084.html)

<sup>12</sup> CDC and the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee (2008) Guideline for Disinfection and Sterilization in Healthcare Facilities, 2008.

[http://www.cdc.gov/hicpac/Disinfection\\_Sterilization/toc.html](http://www.cdc.gov/hicpac/Disinfection_Sterilization/toc.html)

<sup>13</sup> NSW Health, *Policy Distribution System (PDS) for NSW Health*, PD2009\_029.

[http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2009/PD2009\\_029.html](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2009/PD2009_029.html)

<sup>14</sup> AS/NZS 4187:2003 Cleaning, disinfecting and sterilizing reusable medical instruments and equipment, and maintenance of associated environments in health care facilities. Standards Australia/Standards New Zealand.

<http://infostore.saiglobal.com/store2/Details.aspx?ProductID=378393>

<sup>15</sup> Victorian Department of Health (2011), *Cleaning Standards for Victorian health facilities*.

<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/cleaningstandards/>