

Wisconsin HAI Education Series

March 26, 2026



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT
of HEALTH SERVICES

Infection Prevention in Health Care Laundry

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Infection Preventionist

Wisconsin Healthcare-Associated Infections Prevention Program



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT
of HEALTH SERVICES

Agenda

- Laundry in health care
- Infection risk associated with laundry
- Laundry guidelines, standards, and process
- Laundry staff education
- Infection prevention oversight.

Laundry in Health Care

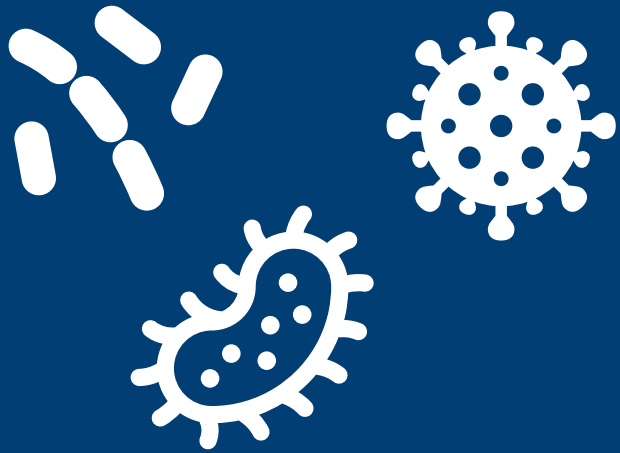


What is Health Care Laundry?

Health care laundry includes:

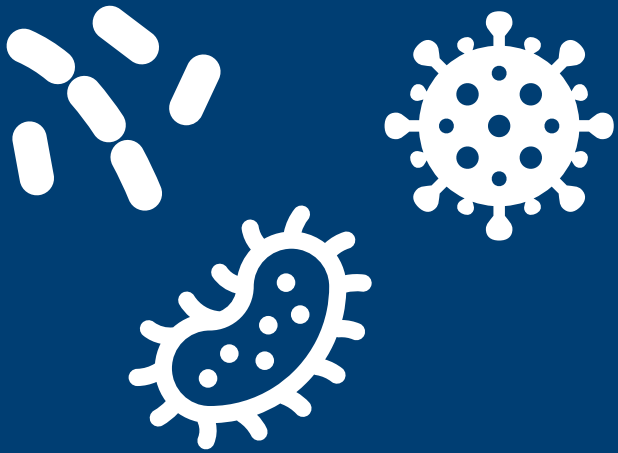
- Bed sheets.
- Blankets.
- Towels.
- Personal clothing.
- Patient apparel.
- Uniforms.
- Scrub suits.
- Gowns.
- Drapes for surgical procedures.

Infection Risk



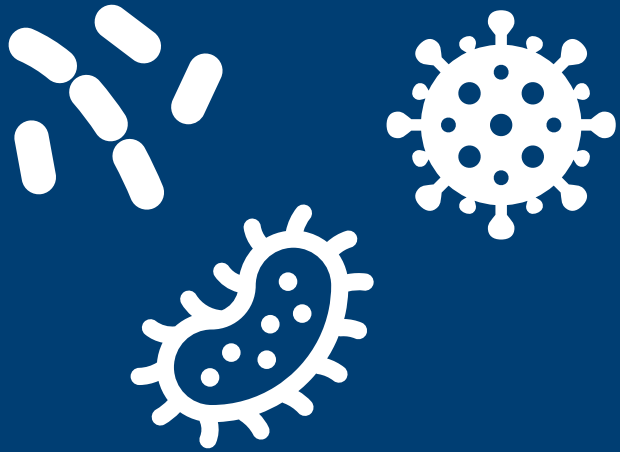
- Contaminated laundry in health care facilities can be a source of disease transmission.
- Laundry can become contaminated from environmental or human sources.

Environmental Sources



- Washing machines
- Transportation vehicles
- Floors

Human Sources



- Improper personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Poor hand hygiene
- Improper management of laundry

Common Pathogens

Environmental sources

- *Fusarium*
- *Acinetobacter*
- *Pseudomonas*
- *Enterococcus*

Human sources

- *Candida*
- *Staphylococcus*
- *Corynebacterium*

Laundry Guidelines and Standards



Healthcare Laundry Accreditation Council Certified Laundry Facility

- The Healthcare Laundry Accreditation Council (HLAC) is the leading authority on laundry standards for the preparation of hygienically clean, reusable health care textiles.
- HLAC is a designation of excellence.



HLAC Certified Laundry Facility

HLAC provides customers with a certification program that:

- Incorporates federal regulations and evidence-based guidelines with industry best practices.
- Includes microbiological testing.
- Aligns with infection prevention and control (IPC).

HLAC Certification

- Routine microbiological and yeast/mold testing
- Laundering protocols
- Quality controls and metrics
- Rapid assessment of contamination issues
- Ongoing quality improvements
- Recertify every three years

External Laundry Processing

Pros

Outsourcing absorbs the costs and resources associated with:

- Staff
- Equipment
- Space
- Maintenance
- Water

Cons

- Not knowing how inventory is maintained.
- Needing to have a plan if laundry facility is down.
- Contracts can be expensive.

Internal Laundry Processing

Pros

- Not held to external contracts & pricing.
- Inventory control.
- Self reliance and Ecofriendly – no transport costs to outside vendor.

Cons

- High staff turn over rate.
- Uncomfortable working conditions (hot, long hours on feet).
- Staff education is needed.
- Cost associated with chemicals and equipment.

Industry Standards

Basic elements

Textile processing

Surgical pack assembly

HLAC certification

Quality monitoring

Basic Elements

- Soiled receiving and sorting areas should be separated from clean processing and storage areas.
- Air pressure differentials should be negative air flow and monitored if possible.
- Standard precautions should be used when handling all soiled laundry.
- All work areas should have access to hand hygiene.
- PPE for handling contaminated laundry should be accessible.

Basic Elements

- Agitation should be minimized to reduce exposure risks.
- Eyewash stations should be accessible, unobstructed, and clean.
- HR policy should be in place to address staff working with illness, open wounds, or sores.
- Ergonomic support such as antifatigue mats and functional carts should be provided.

Basic Elements

Physical design, ventilation, and fixtures should:

- Be based on safe, efficient workflows.
- Use environmental controls to reduce contamination to other parts of the environment or staff.
- Have correct airflows for the areas processing textiles.
- Meet national standards.

Basic Elements

All laundry equipment should be:

- Maintained appropriately, this includes external transport carts and trucks.
- Non-permeable if used for soiled collection.
- Able to withstand rigor of handling.
- Easily identifiable to determine clean and soiled.

Basic Elements

Within laundry sorting area:

- Surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected.
- Staff should adhere to Standard Precautions.
- Sharps containers should be accessible.



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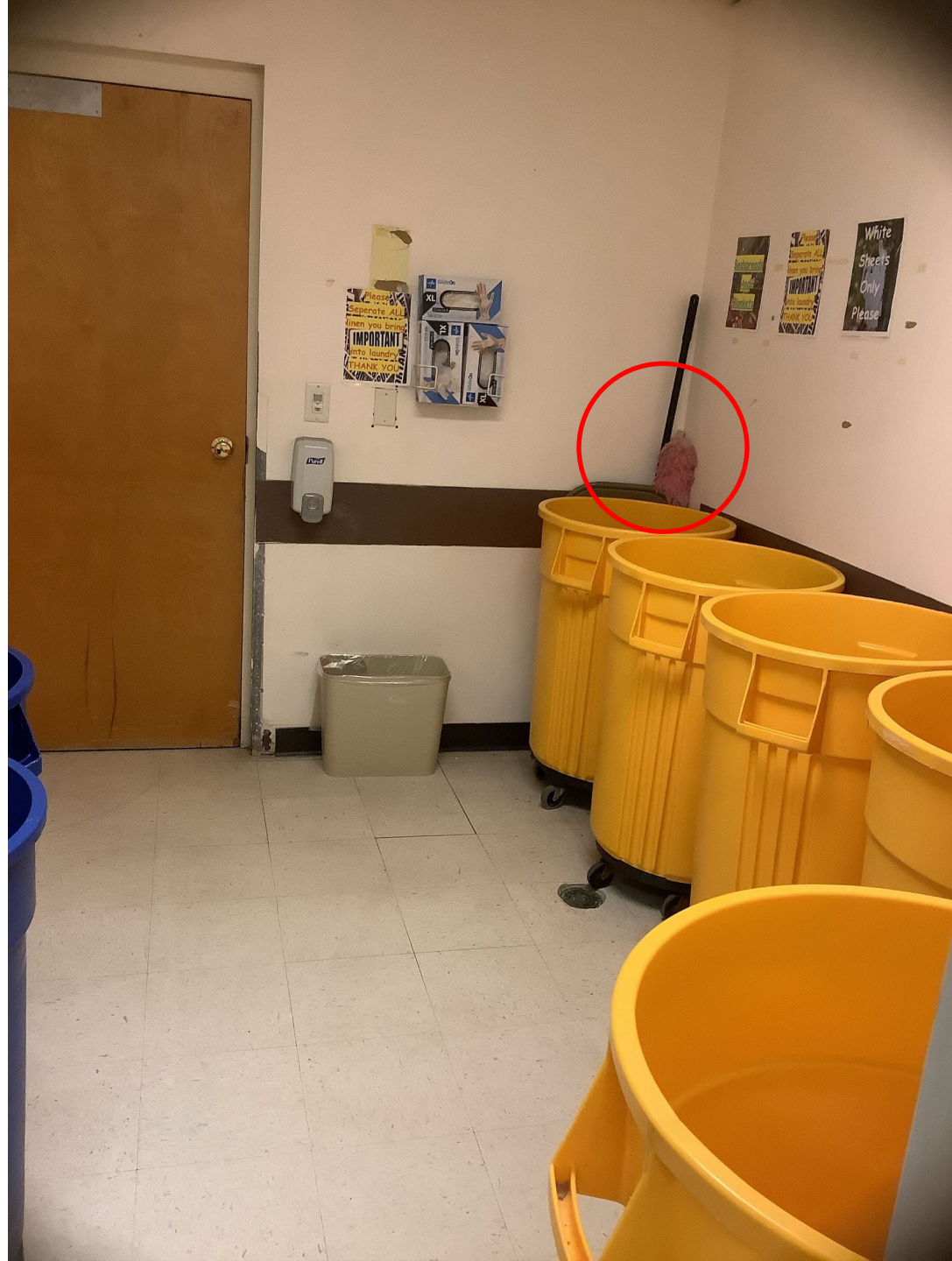
You never fail until you stop
trying

Anything is Possible
Be Bold Be Brave Be you

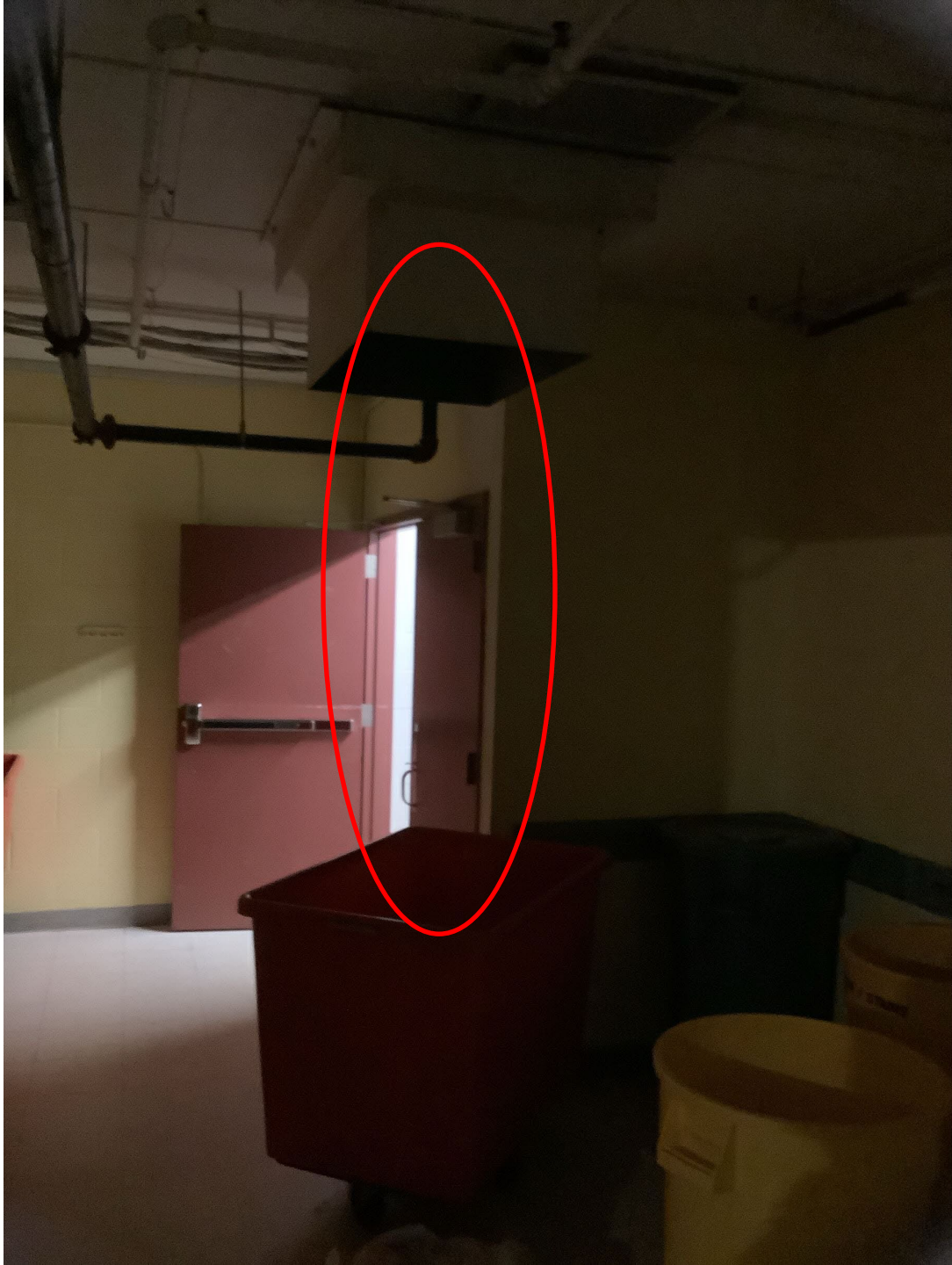


makes all things easy.



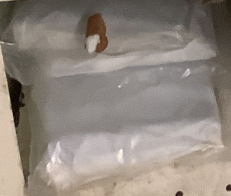








MADE IN U.S.A.





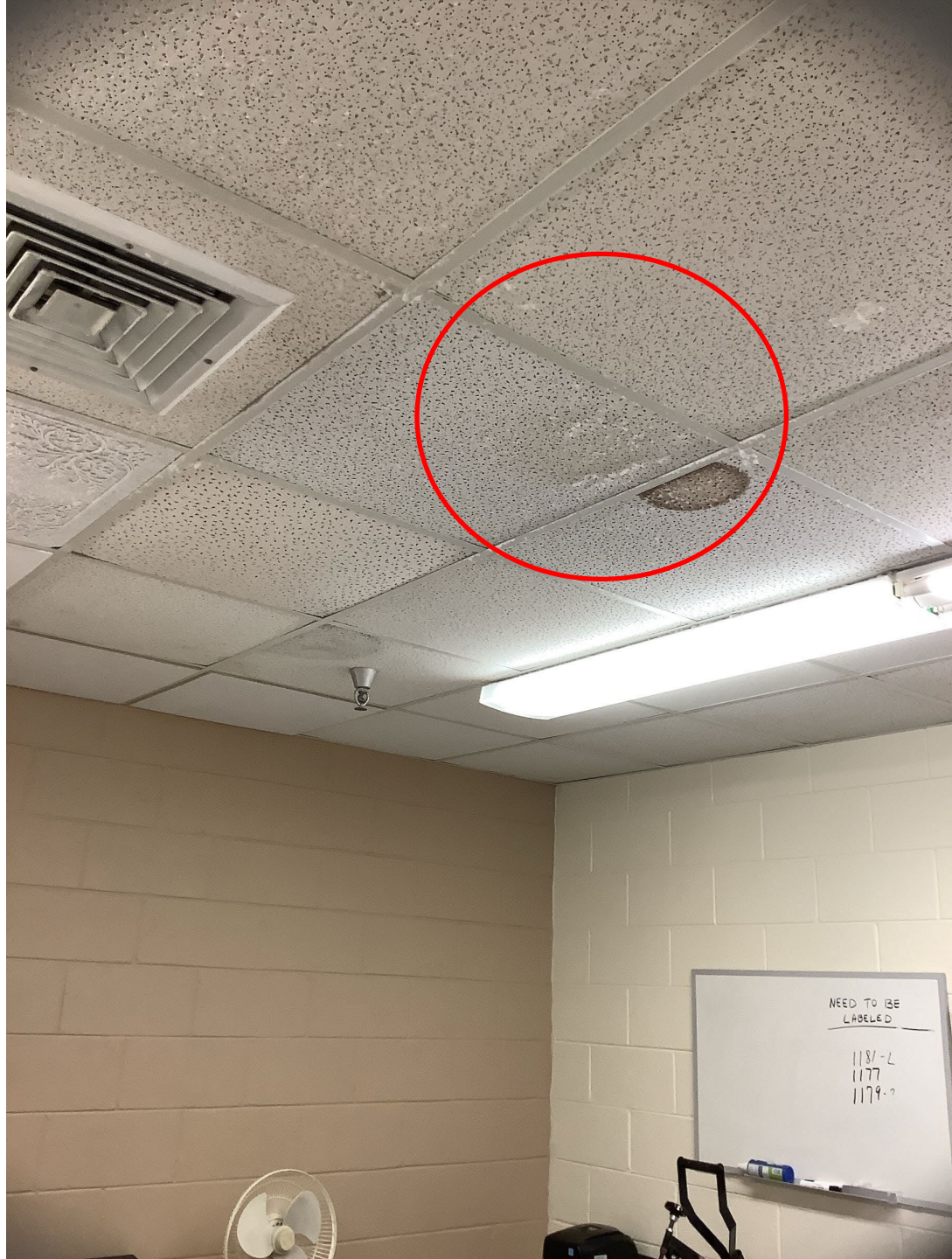




Basic Elements

During the washing and extraction process:

- Environmental laundry and patient laundry should be kept separate.
- Environmental controls should be in place, such as a pest management program.
- Equipment must be maintained and cleaned following the manufacturer's instructions for use (IFUs).







3
4
P.O. BOX 7206 GREENVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA 27835-7206 919-756-8616









ECOLAB
Peroxide Multi-surface Cleaner and Disinfectant

Use on all hard, non-porous surfaces. Do not use on porous surfaces, fabrics, or delicate materials. For use on surfaces, dilute with water to the recommended concentration. For use on fabrics, dilute with water to the recommended concentration. For use on delicate materials, dilute with water to the recommended concentration. For use on surfaces, dilute with water to the recommended concentration. For use on fabrics, dilute with water to the recommended concentration. For use on delicate materials, dilute with water to the recommended concentration.

1.800.35.CLEAN





EMERGENCY EYEWASH

Professional
Laundry
Systems
ECOLAB
1-800-35-CLEAN

REF MSC351400AN
MICRO-KILL BLEACH
GERMICIDAL BLEACH WIPES
Qty: 8 Cartons of 150 count (7 in x 8 in)
Net Weight: 20 lbs (9.07 kg)
KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN
CAUTION

VINYL SYNTHETIC POWDER-FREE EXAM GLOVES



Textile Processing

Optimization of wash cycles:

- Do not overload machines.
- Adhere to established cycle times, water temps, and chemical usage.
- Calibrate chemical delivery system.
- Empty washer post wash cycle and allow to air dry.



Textile Processing

Drying:

- Maintain equipment according to manufacturer's IFUs.
- Monitor to ensure appropriate drying.

Textile Processing

Finishing:

- Implement a processes to reduce risk for contamination from environmental contact.
- Place laundry on carts in a way that mitigate exposure to dust and other environmental contaminates.
- Re-process laundry if at anytime it becomes contaminated.





Textile Processing

Storage:

- Maintain and clean area.
- Designate an area, room, or cart for clean laundry.
- Transport laundry bundled and wrapped.
- Store in a covered container if laundry is unwrapped.
- Only store clean laundry with clean laundry.
- Keep doors closed and limit access.



Laundry Processing



Safe Laundry Processing Considerations

- Ensure laundry storage is a restricted space from processing to point of use.
- Maintain laundry in a hygienic manner.
- Ensure shelving is made of non-porous material and is cleaned on a regular basis.
- Position shelving two inches from the wall, eight inches from the floor, and 18 inches from the ceiling.

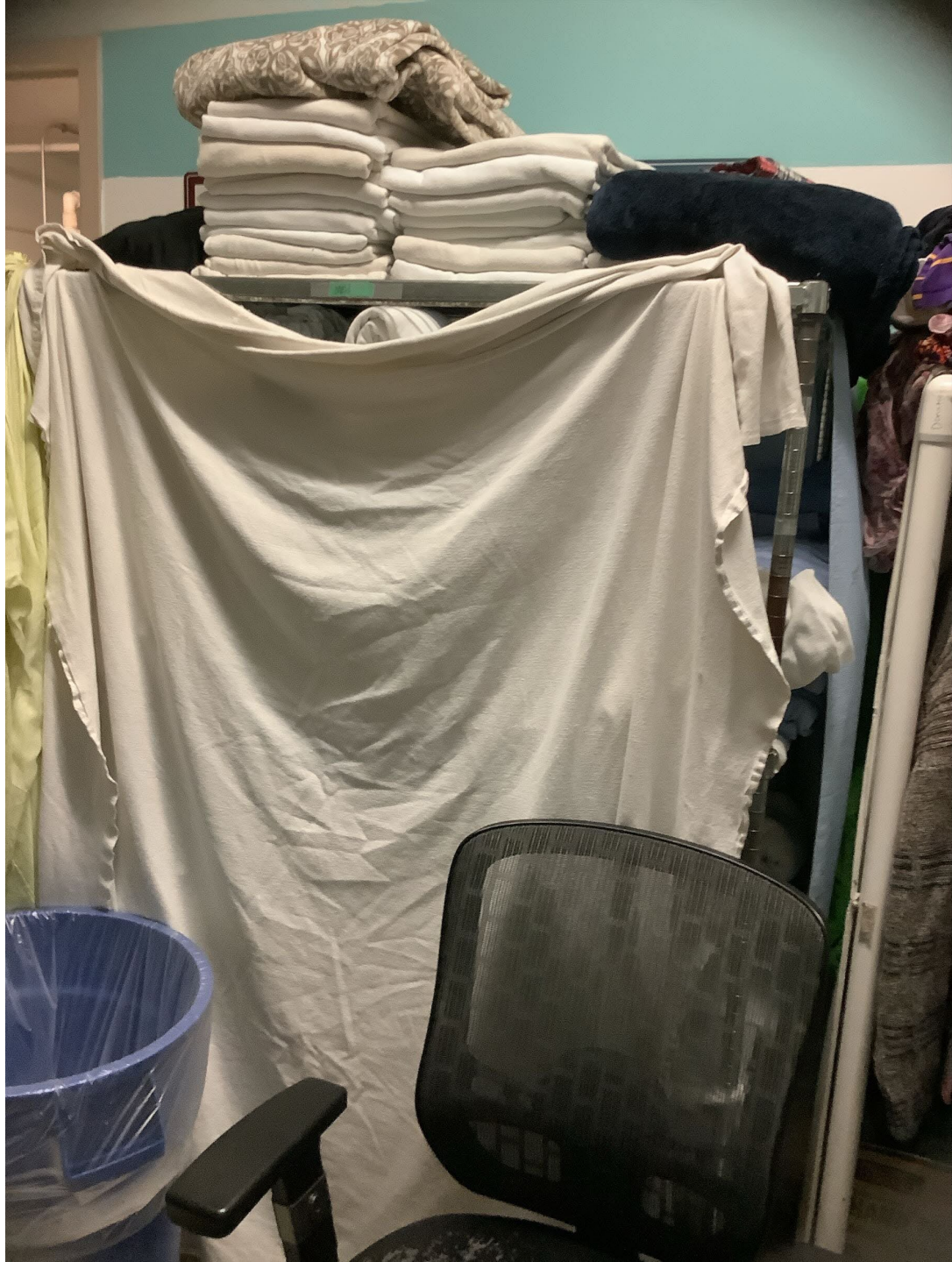






Flat Sheets

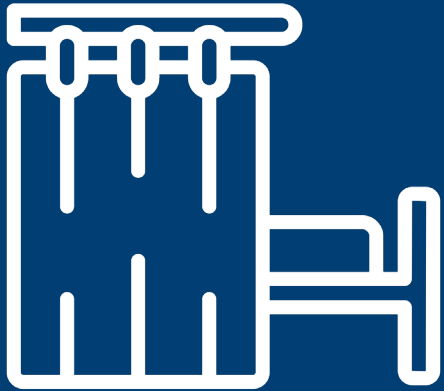
Soakers



Safe Laundry Processing Considerations

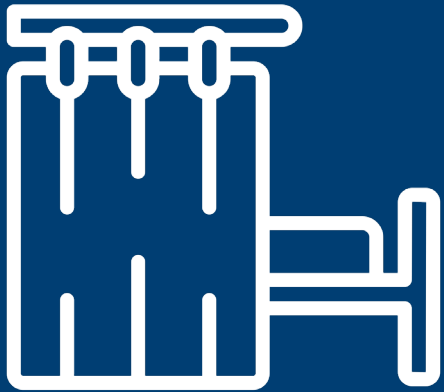
- Transport linens to the point of use in a covered cart.
- Practice hand hygiene after handling linens.
- Avoid co-mingling other supplies on the linen cart.
- Conduct regular audits on process and storage areas.

Privacy Curtains



- Considered a high touch surface.
- Can be resource intensive.
- Minimal evidence to support strong recommendations for management.

Privacy Curtains Management



- Launder when visibly soiled and on a regular rotation, such as every quarter.
- New products on the market:
 - UV-C disinfection
 - Dry hydrogen peroxide
 - Disposable curtains
 - Antimicrobial textiles

Home Laundered Health Care Attire



Items that should **not** be laundered at home include:

- Items that are considered PPE, for example, lab coats.
- Items soiled with blood or other potentially infectious fluids.
- Surgical attire.

Laundry Chemicals

Ensure laundry chemicals:

- Are approved for health care laundry by the FDA (Food and Drug Administration).
- Are effective against tough pathogens like *C. difficile*.
- Have active ingredients like peracetic acid and hydrogen peroxide.

Water Temperature

- Hot water provides an effective means of destroying microorganisms.
- A temperature of at least 160°F for a minimum of 25 minutes is commonly recommended for hot water washing
- The use of chlorine bleach assures an extra margin of safety.
- Chlorine bleach becomes activated at water temperatures of 135°F–145°F.

Staff Education



Laundry Staff Expectations

Staff should be:

- Qualified for their positions through education, training, or level of prior experience.
- Provided guidance, orientation, and equipment to complete work safely.
- Able to demonstrate competency.

Staff Health and Hygiene Considerations

- Establish policies to support staff who may have an illness, open wounds, sores, or skin injuries.
- Avoid eating and drinking in work area.
- Avoid applying cosmetics or lip balm, or handling contact lenses in work area.
- Perform proper hand hygiene.







Staff Health and Hygiene Considerations

- Correctly don and doff PPE.
- Wear hair and beard covers.
- Avoid artificial nails.
- Follow an Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) bloodborne pathogen (BBP) program.
- Place anti-fatigue mats for staff.

Role of the Infection Preventionist (IP)



Role of the Infection Preventionist

- Oversee that laundry standards are being followed.
- Define quality benchmarks and expectations of practice.
- Implement prevention strategies when notified of construction or renovation projects occur to avoid any contamination.
- Conduct annual on-site inspection of laundry facility.

Water Management Program

- Ensure that laundry water sources are included in the water management program.
- Ensure all outlets are being used regularly.
 - Assess for functional dead ends.
 - Include low or non-used outlets in flushing program.



Contingency Planning



Plan for:

- Loss of utilities.
- Medical emergencies.
- Natural and/or man-made disasters.
- Fire.
- Inclement weather.

Conclusion



Include the IP in laundry processing.



Establish a relationship with laundry services.



Provide laundry staff IPC education.



Conduct audits on hand hygiene and PPE workflows.

Resources

- CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), [Infection Control Assessment of Laundry Facility Preparedness to Keep Health Care Textiles Clean](#)
- CDC, [Laundry and Bedding](#)
- HLAC, [Accreditation Standards for Processing Reusable Textiles for Use in Health Care Facilities](#)

Questions?



Contact Information

Paula Pinter

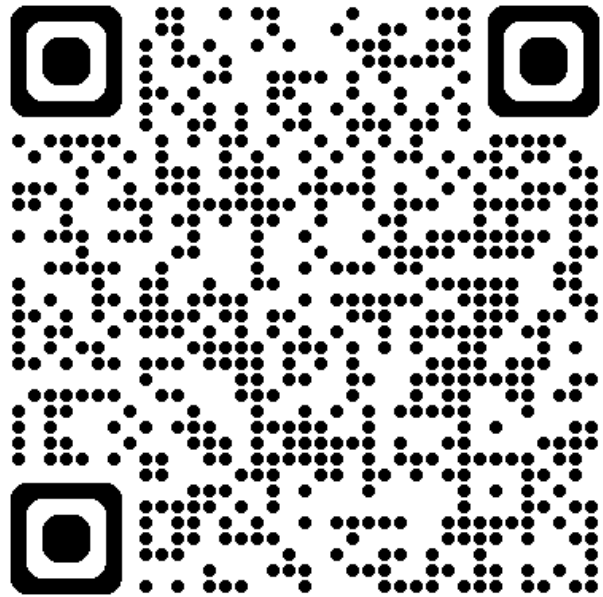


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608-556-8608

Register for Infection Preventionist Bootcamp!



May 20–21



Sauk City

HAI Prevention Program IPs

Region 1: Anna Marciniak; Phone: 608-590-2980

Region 2: Jennifer Kuhn; Phone: 608-772-4768

Region 3: Tess Hendricks; Phone: 608-338-9071

Region 4: Rebecca Hellen; Phone: 608-609-1918

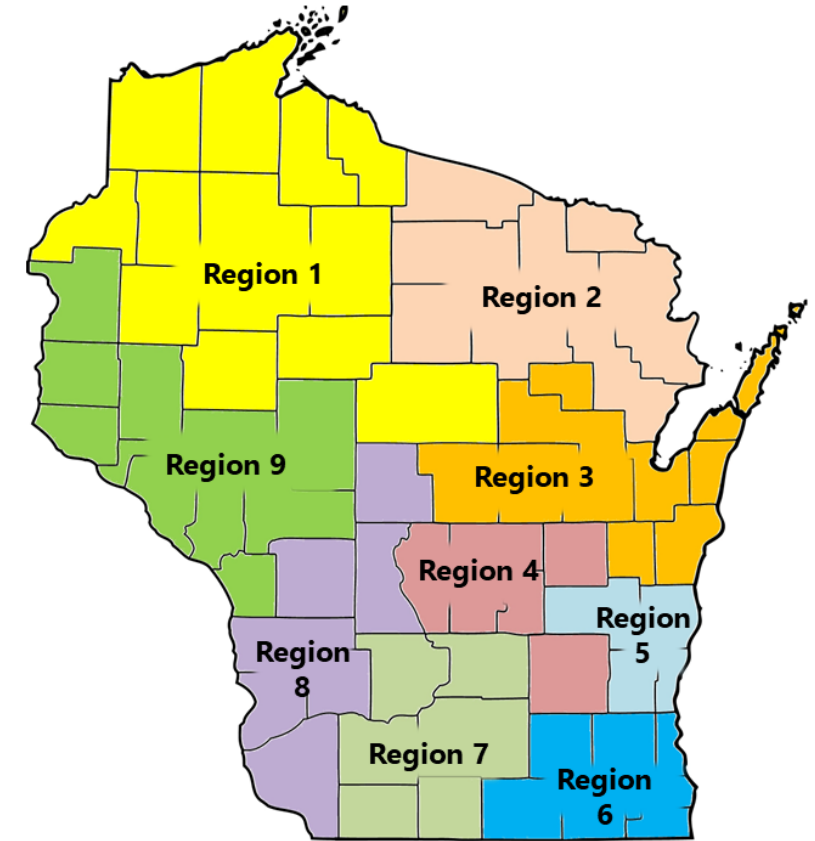
Region 5: Greta Starr; Phone: 608-867-4647

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HAI Prevention Program Contacts



Email: dhswhaipreventionprogram@dhs.wisconsin.gov



Phone: 608-267-7711



Website: www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/hai/contacts.htm

HAI Infection Prevention Education webpage



- HAI: Home
- For Health Professionals
- For Patients & Families
- Infection Prevention Education**
- Infection Preventionist Starter Kit
- Multidrug-Resistant Organisms
- Precautions
- HAI Data
- National Healthcare Safety Network
- Antimicrobial Stewardship



HAI Infection Prevention Education

IPs play an essential role in facility infection prevention policy development, surveillance, and risk assessment. IPs also serve as a resource to other staff and programs within their facilities. The resources on this page are intended to connect health care facility infection preventionists (IP) with education materials to support their role in preventing, detecting, and responding to healthcare-associated infections (HAI).

Webinars

HAI Education Series

The HAI Education Series provides educational presentations on topics including infection prevention, HAIs, antibiotic stewardship, disease surveillance, and outbreak response for health care staff in all setting types, local and Tribal health departments, and other health care partners. Each session features a new, timely topic presented by the Department of Health Services (DHS) program staff, HAI infection preventionists, partner organizations, or other external subject matter experts.

The HAI Education Series is a monthly webinar series, typically held the fourth Thursday of each month. Register for the [HAI Education Series](#).

HAI Education Series recordings



Upcoming HAI Education Session

Date: April 23, 2026

Topic: Dialysis



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