

<b>Section: UTMB On-line Documentation</b> <b>Subject: Healthcare Epidemiology Policies and Procedures</b> <b>Topic: 01.13 – Infection Control Guidelines for Handling Linen and Usage of Laundry Facility in Patient Care Areas</b>	<b>01.13 - Policy</b>  <b>6/10/2025 - Revised</b> <b>1979 - Author</b>
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## 01.13 – Infection Control Guidelines for Handling Linen and Usage of Laundry Facilities in Patient Care Areas

<b>Purpose</b>	To identify infection control practices for the handling of linen and to provide guidelines for the use of the washer and dryer in patient care areas
<b>Audience</b>	All UTMB employees, contract workers, volunteers, and students who use linen for patient care
<b>Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soiled linen should be handled as little as possible and with minimum agitation to prevent contamination of the air and persons handling linen.</li> <li>• When removing linen from a bed or table, vigorous movements shall be avoided to prevent aerosols of microorganisms. The linen shall be carefully inspected to ensure that all hazardous instruments have been removed. Fold the linen to the middle of the bed or table and remove it carefully so that clothing is not contaminated. Place the soiled linen in a linen bag prior to transport to the laundry.</li> <li>• All soiled linen shall be placed into an impervious laundry bag. No sorting is required at the point of origin.</li> <li>• Healthcare workers sorting soiled laundry in a laundry facility should wear gloves and a gown. Perform hand hygiene after removal of gloves.</li> <li>• Bed linen shall be changed routinely and when soiled.</li> <li>• The linens on tables, wheelchairs, and stretchers used for treatment or transport <u>must</u> be changed between each patient.</li> <li>• After the soiled linen bag is full it shall be tied shut and taken directly to the soiled linen area so that soiled linen is not kept in the patient care area for a long period of time. The personnel loading the linen must handle each linen bag in a manner that does not soil his uniform.</li> <li>• <b>HANDWASHING AFTER HANDLING SOILED LINEN IS IMPERATIVE!</b></li> <li>• Patients who are using the laundry facilities for their personal items are not required to wear gloves and a gown but are encouraged to wash their hands after handling soiled laundry.</li> <li>• Wash water should contain 50-150 ppm (1/4 cup) of chlorine bleach if the laundry is heavily contaminated with microorganisms (e.g., with feces, urine, blood, or other body fluids).</li> <li>• Laundry chemicals should be used at proper concentrations and should be suitable for low temperature washing.</li> <li>• Clean linen should be handled, transported, and stored by methods that will ensure its cleanliness preventing the risk of contamination by dust, debris, soiled linens or other soiled items.</li> </ul>

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**References**      Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Best Practices for Environmental Cleaning in Global Healthcare Facilities with Limited Resources: Appendix D – Linen and laundry management. March 19, 2024