I. Title  
*Guidelines for Storage of Patient Care Supplies*

II. Policy  
The following guidelines are intended to ensure that storage of patient materials and supplies’ on patient care units/clinics complies with best practices developed by the UTMB Healthcare Epidemiology Department, and Environmental Health and Safety and Environment of Care Committee.

The following guidelines are to be followed to prevent contamination from flooding or routine cleaning, and to reduce the presence of combustible materials in the hospitals and clinics:

1. Only rooms that have been designated for storage can be used as a storage room. Any change in functional usage of a space must follow the institutional policy for Space Management (IHOP 2.7.2).
2. Rooms being used for storage should be evaluated by Environmental Health and Safety to ensure compliance with the *NFPA Life Safety Code 101*. Contact EHS at 409-772-1781.
3. All patient care supplies must be at least 5 inches from the floor.
4. All patient care supplies should be stored away from the edge of a sink to avoid possible splash contamination.
5. If used, fixed or mobile wired shelving must have the lowest level shelf covered with a plastic cover.
6. Storage must maintain an 18 inch clearance from the ceiling in order to allow for proper function of the fire and safety sprinkler system, however shelving secured to the wall may go all the way to the ceiling, encroaching into the zone within 18 inches of the ceiling provided that the shelving is more than 18 inches laterally away from any sprinkler heads.
7. Cardboard corrugated material delivered to healthcare areas should be broken down and the cardboard removed in a timely manner. Use of corrugated cardboard cartons in healthcare storage areas must be assessed by Healthcare Epidemiology to assure that the use of such cartons does not compromise the cleanliness or sterility of patient supplies.
8. Internal shipping boxes (not corrugated boxes) may be used to dispense sterile and clean supplies but should be discarded when the box has been emptied.
9. Office supplies (i.e. paper, pamphlets etc.) and approved corrugated boxes should be stored on a different shelf/area of closet underneath patient care supplies. When possible store office supplies in a different closet.
10. The use of wooden pallets is limited to the transportation use of logistics and delivery personnel. Only pallets made of synthetic material are allowed in storage rooms where patient care supplies are located.
11. Areas under sinks in patient care areas must be cleared of storage at all times to prevent possible contamination in the event of a water leak.
12. Clean linens in carts and storage areas should be covered at all times.
III. Procedures
Storage policy compliance will be monitored during Environment of Care Tours and Environmental Health and Safety inspections of the patient care areas.

IV. Definitions
Patient Care Supplies: materials or supplies that will be used in the administration of patient care.

V. References

VI. Dates Approved or Amended

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VII. Contact Information
Healthcare Epidemiology
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