01.20 - Laundry Facilities Usage in Patient Care Areas

Purpose: To provide guidelines for the use of the washer and dryer in patient care areas.

Audience: All individuals using the laundry facilities in the patient care areas.

Policy:
- Soiled linen should be handled as little as possible and with minimum agitation to prevent contamination of the air and persons handling linen.
- Healthcare workers sorting soiled laundry should wear gloves and a gown.
- 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.
- 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).
- Laundry chemicals should be used at proper concentrations and should be suitable for low temperature washing.
- Clean linen should be handled, transported, and stored by methods that will ensure its cleanliness.