

LINEN MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE[®]

DOCUMENT SUMMARY/KEY POINTS

- SCHN Linen is managed by HealthShare NSW.
- HealthShare NSW comply with the Australian/New Zealand StandardTM Laundry Practices (AS/NZS4146:2000)
- Ward/Department Managers are responsible to ensure appropriate linen management within their area.
- Only one days' supply of linen may be stored in Wards on weekdays. Additional linen is supplied for weekends or public holidays. If more linen is required urgently or out-of-hours, contact the CHW Linen Manager and SCH Domestic Supervisor.
- Wards/Departments must not over-stock their areas. 'Dusty' linen is an infection risk. Over-stocked linen will be removed by Linen Services.
- Staff handling linen (clinical and domestic/cleaning) should perform hand hygiene to prevent contaminating clean linen (i.e. wash hands regularly).
- If linen is removed from the "Clean linen trolley", it **MUST NOT BE REPLACED** back onto the trolley.
- Soiled linen should be handled as little as possible.
- Double bagging of linen is not necessary except when linen is heavily soiled with blood or other bodily fluids or other fluids which could leak.
- Triple bagging of cytotoxic linen is necessary when linen is contaminated with cytotoxic drugs (see Cytotoxic Contaminated Linen section of the [SCHN Hazardous Medication – Administration and Handling guideline](#)).
- Special procedures occur during an 'outbreak' within a ward.

This document reflects what is currently regarded as safe practice. However, as in any clinical situation, there may be factors which cannot be covered by a single set of guidelines. This document does not replace the need for the application of clinical judgement to each individual presentation.

Approved by:	SCHN Policy, Procedure and Guideline Committee	
Date Effective:	1 st April 2024	Review Period: 3 years
Team Leader:	Manager	Area/Dept: Linen Services

CHANGE SUMMARY

- Due for mandatory review
- Minor changes throughout recommend to re-read the entire document

READ ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- Linen/Domestic Services staff must read and acknowledge they understand the contents of this document
- Nursing Staff, Infection Prevention and Control (IPaC) and Cleaning Services Staff should be aware of this document

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Purpose	3
Procedures	3
Clean linen for Wards and Departments – General Linen.....	3
Management of General Clean Linen in Wards/Departments.....	3
Clean Linen for Central Sterilising Service Dept – Sterilised Linen.....	4
Soiled Linen.....	4
Cytotoxic Contaminated Linen	6
Process at CHW.....	6
Process at SCH.....	6
Linen Services during 'outbreak' in Wards	7
Cleaning Linen Trolleys.....	7
Other Linen Items Managed by SCHN Linen Services	8
Work Health and Safety – Manual Handling	8
Procedures - HealthShare NSW	8
<i>Collection of Soiled Linen by HealthShare NSW</i>	8
<i>Delivery of Clean Linen by HealthShare NSW</i>	9
References:	9

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to detail procedures for linen management at The Children's Hospital at Westmead (CHW) and Sydney Children's at Hospital Randwick (SCH) for the Network.

Areas that use linen are charged accordingly for their linen use. Ward/Department Managers are responsible to ensure appropriate linen management within their area.

Procedures

Clean linen for Wards and Departments – General Linen

- “[Linen Web](#)” (the linen imprest system managed by HealthShare) allocates clean linen to the Hospitals.
- The Linen Manager [CHW] or Domestic Manager [SCH] (or delegate) is responsible to update and maintain ‘Linen Web’ information.
- Set quantities of clean linen is distributed to Wards or Departments.
- **Note:** Clean linen and soiled linen **MUST** be transported separately.
- Clean linen considered ‘poor quality’ (e.g. tears, stains or holes) should be returned to Linen Services to be re-credited.
- Stocks of clean linen are stored in the Linen Department. The Linen Department has two days’ supply of linen at any one time.
- **AT CHW:** All special items belonging to “The Children’s Hospital at Westmead” must be labelled.

Management of General Clean Linen in Wards/Departments

- Only one days’ supply of linen may be stored in Wards on weekdays.
- Additional linen is supplied for weekends or Public Holidays. If more linen is required urgently or out-of-hours:
 - **AT CHW:**
 - Contact the Linen Manager (page 6622).
 - If out-of-hours, Security will provide access to the Linen Department.
 - **AT SCH:** contact Domestic Supervisor [page 44331 between 2:30pm – 8:00pm.
- Wards/Departments must not over-stock their areas. ‘Dusty’ linen is an infection risk. Over-stocked linen will be removed by Linen Services.
- Staff handling linen (clinical and domestic/cleaning services) should practice hand hygiene to prevent contaminating clean linen (i.e. wash hands regularly).

- If linen is removed from the “Clean linen trolley”, it **MUST NOT BE REPLACED** back onto the trolley.
- Pillows:
 - Health workers (Allied Health, Nursing, domestic/cleaning services staff) must wipe down pillows, with neutral detergent, when changing pillowcases and between patients.
 - All pillows must be covered with plastic protectors.
 - Protectors must be replaced when torn or damaged.
- Ward Linen trolleys **MUST NOT** store any items other than clean linen.

Clean Linen for Central Sterilising Service Dept – Sterilised Linen

- “Linen Web” (the linen imprest system managed by HealthShare) allocates clean sterilised linen to the Central Sterilising Service Dept. (CSSD).
- The Manager of the CSSD (or delegate) is responsible to update and maintain Linen Web information for SCHN CSSD supplies.
- CSS staff are responsible to distribute and manage sterilised linen supplies within Perioperative Services as per local policy.
- Clean linen and soiled linen **MUST** be transported separately.
- If linen is removed from the “Clean linen trolley”, it **MUST NOT BE REPLACED** back onto the trolley.
- Staff handling linen (clinical and domestic/cleaning services) should always practice hand hygiene to prevent contaminating clean linen. (i.e. wash hands regularly).

Soiled Linen

- NSW Health policy instructions (PD2017_013): and Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 4146:2000 – Laundry Practice:
 - Soiled linen should be handled as little as possible. Agitation should be minimised to prevent airborne particles which may contaminate patients/staff or visitors.
 - Soiled linen should be placed in linen skips (with a bag inserted) at the point of generation (e.g. at the bedside).
Note: DO NOT overfill the linen skip: $\frac{3}{4}$ fill ONLY. Use another skip if there is an overflow - multiple skips are available in Wards.
 - When a soiled linen bag is three quarter full, Cleaners are responsible to secure the bag and take it to the ‘waste disposal’ room/area in the Ward/Department for collection by Linen Services staff. (With the exception of Cytotoxic contaminated linen - refer to [Cytotoxic Contaminated Linen](#) section).
- Information for ALL nursing, cleaning services and linen services staff:

- There are five types of 'soiled' (dirty) linen (see Figure 1).
- When handling dirty linen (of any type), gloves must be worn **AT ALL TIMES**.
- Hand hygiene after removing gloves.
- Sharps and other objects must not be discarded into linen bags.
- All soiled linen is placed in the colour coded linen bag as per Figure 1

Figure 1:

LINEN BAG COLOUR CODES PLEASE SEGREGATE ALL SOILED LINEN INTO APPROPRIATE BAGS AS INDICATED BELOW ATT: PLEASE ENSURE LINEN BAGS ARE TIED
WHITE BAGS – B17 GENERAL LINEN ONLY: Sheets, Blankets, Towels, Opsuite Scrubs etc
GREEN BAGS – B19 STERILE LINEN ONLY: Feeder packs and All Green Linen
BLUE BAGS – B20 SPECIAL ITEMS: Slings, bedspreads and Slide Sheets etc
PURPLE BAGS – B26 CYTOTOXIC CONTAMINATION: Triple Bagged
ORANGE BAGS – B26 BAG ENVELOPE Mental Health

NOTE: Staff are to follow the "Handling Cytotoxic contaminated linen" Safe Work Practice for **linen contaminated with Cytotoxic drugs**.

- Double bagging of linen is not necessary in most circumstances, however there are two exceptions:
 - Linen heavily soiled with blood or body substances, or other fluids that have potential to leak, should be contained, stored and transported in leak proof bags contained within the linen bag.

- As directed by Infection Prevention and Control (such new emerging infectious diseases)
- Cleaning Services staff are responsible to tie-off soiled linen bags unless as otherwise stated per this policy.

Cytotoxic Contaminated Linen

Process at CHW

Linen contaminated with cytotoxic drugs must be placed in a triple bag system and sent for laundering (SafeWork NSW guide, [Cytotoxic drugs and related waste – risk management - SafeWork NSW](#))

The practice at CHW requires a plastic purple cytotoxic bag to line a purple linen bag.

This procedure is performed in all areas where cytotoxic drugs are prepared or administered. Also refer to Safe Work Practice “Handling Cytotoxic contaminated linen”.

1. **Nursing staff** must identify patients receiving cytotoxic medication or who have received cytotoxic medication within the past 7 days.
2. **Cleaning staff** need to place the triple bag system onto the linen skip.
3. **Nursing staff** to use mandatory PPE when handling cytotoxic contaminated linen as per policy.
4. **Nursing staff** to dispose of the cytotoxic contaminated linen into the clear plastic inner bag lining the purple plastic “cytotoxic” bags.
5. **Nursing staff** to tie off full clear and purple plastic cytotoxic liner bags.
6. **Nursing staff** to notify the cleaning staff when linen bag requires disposal.
7. **Cleaning staff** to tie off outer linen bag (only if the purple cytotoxic bag has been tied off. If it has not been tied off, cleaning staff are to inform the Cleaning Manager who is then to report to the NUM of the Ward).
8. **Cleaning staff** to remove the tied-off linen bag and take to the ward waste holding area.
9. **Linen Services staff** will collect the bags and load onto a designated cytotoxic linen trolley.

Clean linen and soiled linen must not be transported together.

Process at SCH

Linen contaminated with cytotoxic drugs/body fluids must be placed in a cytotoxic plastic bag by the nurse and is disposed into the cytotoxic bin.

The linen service at SCH does not launder cytotoxic linen.

Linen Services during 'outbreak' in Wards

1. Infection Prevention and Control and/or NUM notifies Linen Services of the effected ward/s.
2. Process for 'Clean linen':
 - i. **Linen Services staff** bring 'clean linen' trolley to the entrance of the Ward.
 - ii. **Nursing staff** are to come and collect the linen required for the day and store in Ward linen trolley.
 - iii. Nursing staff are to continue collecting clean linen in this manner until notification from Infection Prevention and Control has been received that the outbreak has passed.
 - iv. After the outbreak has finished, any clean linen found in the Ward should then be discarded into the 'dirty linen' skip for cleaning.
 - v. The empty clean linen trolley must be wiped down with detergent or bleach (Infection Prevention and Control will advise) before new clean linen can be stocked.
3. Process for soiled linen during an outbreak:
 - i. **Nursing staff** fill the linen bags $\frac{3}{4}$ full.
 - ii. **Cleaning staff** are responsible to securely tie off soiled linen bags within the Ward. Cleaning staff entering an 'infectious' area must wear appropriate PPE.
 - iii. Tied-off linen bags are to be taken to the waste holding area.
 - iv. **Linen Services staff** will collect the bags as per normal process.

Cleaning Linen Trolleys

- Linen Services are responsible to clean linen trolleys.
- A regular cleaning schedule using a neutral detergent is in practice by Linen Services.
- If the trolleys are visibly soiled outside of the above cleaning schedule, the trolleys are wiped down using a neutral detergent or bleach solution (if body fluid is present).
- After a Ward outbreak 'clean' linen trolleys are cleaned with the product recommended by IP&C.

HealthShare NSW clean and manage trolleys owned by them.

Other Linen Items Managed by SCHN Linen Services

At SCH: Industrial Washing machine facility for microfiber mops only.

At CHW: Linen Services manage other items such as:

- Cleaning of pillows and shower curtains
- Washing special items such as microfiber mops, baby clothing, nets, belts, quilts and double bed sheets
- Items to be dry-cleaned (e.g. bed screen and other special items such as doonas and mattress protectors)

Note: Domestic type washing machines must only be used for a patient's personal items. Washing must involve the use of an appropriate detergent and hot water to 60°C. If hot water is not available, then only individual patient loads can be washed at one time. Clothes dryers should be used to dry a patient's personal items.

Soiled linen must not be rinsed or sorted in patient care areas or washed in domestic washing machines.

Work Health and Safety – Manual Handling

- Linen Services staff must adhere to WHS Manual Handling tasks as per task specific training procedures.
- Identify hazardous manual tasks related to Linen Services, assess the risk and consider control measure to eliminate or mitigate the risk.
- Use mechanical aids such as trolley to transport heavy bags of linen or loads of linen to/from wards and departments.
- Arrange work tasks to minimise the work load when lifting, carrying or moving linen.
- Work organisation must meet the demands for Linen Services during peak periods.
- Do not over load linen trolleys or exert force when moving a heavy linen trolley.

Procedures - HealthShare NSW

Collection of Soiled Linen by HealthShare NSW

- Soiled linen bags are stacked onto the HealthShare NSW linen trolley and taken to Waste Docks for collection by HealthShare NSW.
- All areas to ensure all soiled linen bags are correctly presented for collection, in particular that they not overfilled and strings are correctly tied.

- The cytotoxic linen bags are to be loaded onto a designated cytotoxic linen trolley and taken to Waste Dock for collection by HealthShare NSW.
- HealthShare NSW Linen Services treat all soiled linen bags as 'contaminated' linen and appropriate safety measures are activated.

Delivery of Clean Linen by HealthShare NSW

HealthShare NSW provide a daily delivery (Mon-Fri) of clean linen and sterile linen.

In emergency situations only, HealthShare NSW may deliver on weekends.

Linen Services staff are responsible to reconcile the order and disseminate the linen.

References:

1. NSW Health Infection Prevention and Control in Healthcare Settings Policy: PD2023_25
https://www1.health.nsw.gov.au/pds/ActivePDSDocuments/PD2023_025.pdf
2. Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 4146:2000 – Laundry Practice.
<https://www.saiglobal.com/PDFTemp/Previews/OSH/as/as4000/4100/4146.pdf>
3. NSW Health: Clinical Excellence Commission: Infection Prevention and Control Practice Handbook. (2020) Section 4.7.1 http://www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/383239/IPC-Practice-Handbook-2020.PDF
4. NHMRC Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare (2019) Section 3.1.8 <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-guidelines-prevention-and-control-infection-healthcare-2019>
5. [SCHN Hazardous Medication – Administration and Handling Practice Guideline](#)
6. SafeWork NSW Code of Practice – [Hazardous Manual Handling Tasks](#) Aug'19
7. NSW Work Health and Safety Act 2011
8. NSW Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017

Copyright notice and disclaimer:

The use of this document outside Sydney Children's Hospitals Network (SCHN), or its reproduction in whole or in part, is subject to acknowledgement that it is the property of SCHN. SCHN has done everything practicable to make this document accurate, up-to-date and in accordance with accepted legislation and standards at the date of publication. SCHN is not responsible for consequences arising from the use of this document outside SCHN. A current version of this document is only available electronically from the Hospitals. If this document is printed, it is only valid to the date of printing.