

Environmental Cleaning in Ambulatory Care Settings

As more healthcare operations/procedures are being performed in ambulatory care settings instead of hospitals, a standardized environmental cleaning program and proper resources must be in place in these settings to reduce the risk of infections and safeguard healthcare staff, patients, and visitors.

More frequent cleaning to prevent infection spread is necessary in ambulatory care settings because patients occupy rooms for shorter periods of time and patient care areas are not always private rooms, among many other reasons. Moreover, environmental cleaning in any healthcare setting is one of the foundational components of an effective infection prevention and control (IPC) program.

Specific aspects related to environmental cleaning as part of an ambulatory care facility's IPC program are presented in this checklist.¹ Considering these elements of an effective IPC program may help facilities enhance their programs to optimize patient safety and lessen potential infection spread.

	Yes	No
Does the facility have an environmental cleaning program consisting of written policies and procedures for the routine cleaning and disinfecting of environmental surfaces?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the environmental cleaning program assessed annually or according to state or federal requirements and updated if appropriate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a dedicated infection preventionist or other qualified individual been named to support the program?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are clinical staff involved in planning for and implementing the environmental cleaning program?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
As part of the environmental cleaning program, does the facility perform an annual risk analysis to assess which cleaning tactics may need improvement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No
Does the facility have clear, written expectations of the cleaning tasks for all healthcare employees that perform environmental cleaning?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is job-specific training conducted, and is competency validated for healthcare employees who perform environmental cleaning? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do training and competency validation occur at hire, annually, when new equipment is introduced, if an infectious disease outbreak occurs, and when policies/procedures change? If contract personnel perform environmental cleaning, does the facility verify that the contracting company provides this training and verifies competency? 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Does the facility have protocols to conduct periodic assessment of environmental cleaning procedures to ensure adequacy and consistency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do the facility administrators provide sufficient time and adequate resources to clean a room properly between procedures?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are standardized and detailed procedures in place for cleaning and disinfecting spills of blood, body fluids, and other potentially infectious substances? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are posters or laminated cards with clear language displayed in the facility that specify these detailed cleaning and disinfecting procedures? 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Does the facility have the supplies necessary for appropriate cleaning and disinfection procedures (e.g., Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] registered disinfectants)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If contract personnel provide environmental cleaning services, does the facility verify that the contracting company provides appropriate EPA-registered products? 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Are cleaners and disinfectants used in accordance with manufacturer's instructions (e.g., dilution, storage, shelf-life, and contact time)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are healthcare employees educated and trained on the use of these cleaners and disinfectants? 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Are the chemicals used in disinfectants, detergent/disinfectants, and germicidal wipes registered with the EPA with label claims for healthcare use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No
Are operating rooms (ORs) cleaned and disinfected with an EPA-registered disinfectant after each surgical or invasive procedure?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are ORs terminally cleaned after the last procedure of the day with a wet vacuum or single-use mop and an EPA-registered hospital-grade disinfectant?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the facility use cleaning products that kill the largest number of microorganisms in the shortest period of time? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are healthcare employees educated and trained on the use of these cleaners and disinfectants, including kill times? 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Are all high-touch surfaces in patient care areas cleaned and disinfected with an EPA-registered disinfectant after each procedure in rooms where surgical or other invasive procedures are performed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do healthcare employees that perform environmental cleaning wear appropriate personal protective equipment (e.g., gloves, gowns, masks, and eye protection) to prevent exposure to infectious agents and chemicals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do the healthcare employees performing environmental cleaning ensure that the material of the cloth or mop is compatible with the chemical and the method of cleaning that the facility is using?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the facility use fluorescent gel or adenosine triphosphate (ATP) bioluminescence testing on high-touch surfaces to evaluate cleaning practices?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the facility routinely audit (monitor and document) adherence to cleaning and disinfection procedures, including using products in accordance with manufacturer’s instructions (e.g., dilution, storage, shelf-life, and contact time)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the facility provide updates to healthcare employees performing environmental cleaning about new IPC concerns?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the facility routinely audit (monitor and document) adherence to recommended IPC practices for surgical infection prevention, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adherence to preoperative surgical scrub and hand hygiene? Appropriate use of surgical attire and drapes? Adherence to aseptic technique and sterile field? 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper ventilation requirements (air changes per hour) in surgical suites? • Minimization of traffic in the OR? • Adherence to cleaning and disinfection of environmental surfaces? 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Does the facility provide regular feedback from audits to healthcare employees performing environmental cleaning regarding their adherence to cleaning and disinfection procedures and surgical infection prevention practices?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Resources

For more information, see MedPro’s [Risk Resources: Infection Prevention & Control in Ambulatory Care Settings](#).

Endnotes

¹ Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology. (n.d.). Environmental services. Retrieved from <https://apic.org/resources/topic-specific-infection-prevention/environmental-services/>; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023, January 12 [last reviewed]). *Infection control assessment and response (ICAR) tool for general infection prevention and control (IPC) across settings*. Retrieved from www.cdc.gov/hai/prevent/infection-control-assessment-tools.html; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, & Infection Control Africa Network. (2019). *Best practices for environmental cleaning in healthcare facilities in resource-limited settings*. Retrieved from www.cdc.gov/hai/prevent/resource-limited/index.html; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016). *Guide to infection prevention for outpatient settings: Minimum expectations for safe care* (Version 2.3). Retrieved from www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/pdf/outpatient/guidechecklist.pdf; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2003). Guidelines for environmental infection control in health-care facilities: Recommendations of CDC and the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee (HICPAC). *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 52(RR10), 1-42. Retrieved from www.cdc.gov/MMWR/preview/MMWRhtml/rr5210a1.htm; Connell, B. (2017, February 1). Cleaning acute care hospitals and ambulatory settings. *Health Facilities Management Magazine*. Retrieved from www.hfmmagazine.com/articles/2690-cleaning-acute-care-hospitals-and-ambulatory-settings; Joint Commission Resources. (2018). *Environmental infection prevention: Guidance for continuously maintaining a safe patient care and survey-ready environment*. Retrieved from <https://store.jcrinc.com/environmental-infection-prevention-guidance-for-continuously-maintaining-a-safe-patient-care-and-survey-ready-environment/>; Minnesota Hospital Association. (n.d.). *Environmental services cleaning guidebook*. Retrieved from www.mnhospitals.org/Portals/0/Documents/ptsafety/CDICleaning/4.%20Environmental%20Services%20Cleaning%20Guidebook.pdf

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