

 <p>TEN TEXPROS CO. LIMITED Africa's Premier Provider of Linen Solutions</p>	Doc No: TTP.R.L.012	Prepared By: Ssemuyiga Denis
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TEN TEXPROS LAUNDRY SERVICES

GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING HIGHLY INFECTIOUS LINEN

INTRODUCTION

Infected linen refers to linen which has been used and contaminated by infectious bodily fluids, excreta, blood or contaminated linen from isolation units for patients who are known, or clinically suspected to be infectious with diseases like COVID-19, Ebola, salmonella, MRSA, hepatitis A, B, C, D or G, open pulmonary tuberculosis, HIV. Highly infectious linen should be handled by trained and skilled staff to guarantee its safety after processing. Therefore, linen from sources with such conditions is treated as **infected**. If such linen is not handled appropriately, it can lead to the spread of infections within and outside the hospital.

PURPOSE

This document shall guide on the appropriate handling of highly infectious linen in a way that will prevent and control its spread and protect patients, visitors, housekeepers, clinicians, laundry staff and other health workers from contamination and/or injury associated with infectious linen and to avoid damage to laundry machinery during the course of its processing.

SCOPE

The document shall guide laundry staff, housekeepers, ward staff, visitors, patients and other health workers on the appropriate handling of highly infectious linen in the hospital.

RESPONSIBILITY

It shall be the responsibility of the supervisor to train staff in good practices of handling highly infectious and private patient linen.

Laundry staff, housekeepers and nurses have the responsibility of adhering to good practices of managing highly infectious and private linen.

The hospital management shall have the responsibility to provide materials required to manage highly infectious and private linen properly.

Patients' private/personal linen

- Patients' personal/private linen should not be processed from hospital laundry **except** for patients who are on run away and their private linen will be required to be processed and kept in the hospital laundry. In such situations, such patients' private linen will be managed like **infected linen**.
- Where it will be required to wash patients' private linen as a commercial project, a separate laundry unit with specific staff and guiding management processes will be established.

Principles of good practices when managing highly infectious linen and patients' personal clothing

- ❖ Laundry staff member to handle linen must be well equipped with the following personal protective equipment (PPE);
 - Overall for men or long dress for females
 - Head cap.
 - Face mask.
 - Face shield/goggles.
 - Surgical gloves.
 - Heavy duty gloves.
 - Gumboots.
 - Apron /impermeable gown/surgical disposal overall.
- ❖ Have a reasonable sized trolley (with a cover) designated for carrying contaminated linen and a red water proof bag or a red plastic container (in case a trolley has no cover) to contain and completely cover infectious linen while in transit.
- ❖ Infectious linen should be sluiced by **qualified clinical staff** whilst on wards/units and packed in red or yellow bin liners (water proof bags).
- ❖ It should be stored in well covered plastic containers with a label indicating "**sluiced infectious linen and the quantities of each item**" inside, whilst waiting for collection by laundry team.
- ❖ Red or yellow bin liners should be filled at most $\frac{3}{4}$ full for easier loading onto trolleys and completely cover the trolley to prevent and control spread of infections during collection and transit to laundry.
- ❖ Laundry staff should be notified on phone when there is infectious linen to be collected isolation units for processing.
- ❖ Laundry team should never inspect and count infectious linen whilst on wards/units.
- ❖ Laundry staff transfer bin liners (water proof bags) containing infectious linen from ward/unit containers into laundry red containers.
- ❖ Laundry team carefully load well covered plastic containers of sluiced but infectious linen onto trolleys and wheel it to laundry.
- ❖ While in laundry, gently off load infectious linen from trolleys and store it in an area designated for infectious linen in the dirty section, while waiting for specific processing.
- ❖ Agitation of linen bags during loading, transit and offloading should be avoided to avoid contamination of the environment.

- ❖ Never sort, count and record infectious linen while in laundry. These should be done after drying.
- ❖ Process infectious linen separate from used (normal contaminated) linen, either at last or using separate washing machine. Proceed to dry, iron, fold, sub store and deliver clean back in an isolated manner, that is to say, separate from other linen.
- ❖ Wash infectious linen/cotton at hot temperatures above 60°C (140°) for not less than 10 minutes and synthetic fabrics like mosquito nets at temperatures not less than 40°C for at least 20 minutes.
- ❖ Linen from viral hemorrhagic fever patients should be double bagged in yellow or red bin liners with biohazard symbol and then incinerated.

Labeling of highly infectious linen

- All linen from isolation units for known or suspected infectious patients shall be labeled with a gray colored cloth (khaki cloth) in addition to the wording **“TEN TEXPROS, isolation unit”**.
- Linen from other wards/units used by known or suspected infectious patients shall retain the color code and label of that ward/unit, but processed as infectious linen up to the ironing stage. After the ironing stage it can be mixed again with linen of that ward/unit.

CONCLUSION

Inappropriate handling of highly infectious linen or patient' personal cloth can lead to the spread of deadly infections within the hospital and its surroundings. Proper handling of infectious linen control and prevent spread of infections for a safe community.

REFERENCES

- *Linen management manual of Ten Texpros, No. TT.MAN.LIN.001, pages (20 and 22).*

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