

# Environmental management in health care facilities Policy Directive

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# Environmental management in health care facilities

## Policy Directive

### 1. Policy Statement

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Effective management of the healthcare environment leads to better outcomes for patients and a safer working environment for staff by minimising the opportunities for transmission of infectious microorganisms via contaminated surfaces, air and water.

The purpose of this policy directive is to:

- > establish a uniform approach to the management of the healthcare environment to minimise the risk of transmission of infectious diseases to patients and healthcare staff
- > provide governance that clearly outlines the responsibilities of individuals and health services in the management of the environment across the public health care sector
- > ensure that all SA Health staff consistently adhere to the recommendations in the relevant state and national regulations, standards, policies and guidelines.

This policy directive is to be read and administered in conjunction with the relevant information and resources provided in:

- > *SA Health Cleaning Standard for Healthcare Facilities Policy Directive (2018)*
- > *SA Health Construction and Renovation at Existing Healthcare Facilities: Infection prevention and control Policy Guideline (2018)*
- > *Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare (2010).*

### 2. Roles and Responsibility

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**Chief Executive SA Health is responsible for:**

- > ensuring that all SA Health employees or persons who provide health services on behalf of SA Health are aware of and comply with this policy directive.

**The Infection Control Service, Communicable Disease Control Branch will:**

- > establish, maintain and periodically review the effectiveness of the *SA Health Environmental management in health care facilities Policy Directive* and associated resources.

**Local Health Network (LHN) Chief Executive Officers will:**

- > ensure there are effective systems for the management of a safe environment
- > ensure that the day-to-day responsibility for establishing and monitoring the implementation of this policy is delegated to the relevant senior managers.

**Executive Directors, Heads of Service and other Senior Managers will:**

- > develop, implement and monitor local processes to support employees, and other persons providing health services on behalf of SA Health, to maintain effective management of the environment
- > foster a climate which facilitates a standardised approach to management of the environment

- > ensure that staff responsible for management of the environment receive appropriate and relevant training
- > ensure that there is a performance development process in place for correcting consistently poor individual compliance with recommended practice
- > ensure that appropriate equipment is made readily available to all relevant staff.

**All SA Health employees will:**

- > ensure they operate in accordance with the principles outlined in this policy directive.

### 3. Policy Requirements

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All SA Health Local Health Networks will comply with all relevant state and national guidelines and standards relating to:

- > **Decontamination of non-critical shared patient equipment** – used patient care equipment such as infusion pumps, oximeters, BP cuffs, commodes must be cleaned and decontaminated prior to use on another patient. The method of cleaning should be in line with the relevant paragraph in section of B1.4 of the Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare (2010) and the manufacturer’s instructions.
- > **Environmental surface cleaning** – the role of environmental cleaning is to reduce the number of infectious agents that may be present on surfaces and minimise the risk of transfer of micro-organisms from one person/object to another, thereby reducing the risk of cross infection. Specific guidance can be found in the *SA Health Cleaning Standard for Healthcare Facilities Policy Directive (2014)* and section B1.4 of the *Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare (2010)*.
- > **Infection prevention and control during healthcare facility construction and renovation** – effective dust control and prevention measures are necessary during construction and renovation projects within a healthcare setting. Specific guidance can be found in the *SA Health Construction and Renovation at Existing Healthcare Facilities: Infection prevention and control Policy Guideline (2018)*.
- > **Management of blood and body fluid spills** – spills must be removed immediately or as soon as practicable, and the area cleaned and disinfected dependent upon the setting and volume of spill. Specific guidance can be found in section B1.4.3 of the *Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare (2010)*.
- > **Safe handling of laundry and linen** – all used linen should be handled with care to avoid dispersal of microorganisms into the environment and to avoid contact with staff clothing. Specific guidance can be found in section B1.9 of the *Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare (2010)*.
- > **Safe handling of sharps** – all sharps must be disposed of at the point of use in designated puncture resistant containers that conform to the relevant Australian Standards (AS/NZS 4261:1994 reusable and AS 4031:1002 non-reusable). Specific guidance can be found in section B1.3 Handling and disposing of sharps of the *Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare (2010)*.

- > **Safe handling of waste** – it is important that all staff dealing with waste adopt procedures that minimise risk to both themselves and the environment. There is a legal obligation to classify and contain waste according to the facility waste management plan and State Regulations: *Environment Protection (Waste to Resources) Policy 2010, South Australia and Environment Protection Authority 2003: Medical waste – storage, transport and disposal, South Australia*. Further information can also be found in section B1.8 of the *Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare (2010)*.
- > **Safe water and air supply** – it is important to ensure that the water and air supply within healthcare facilities is safe and free of harmful disease-causing microorganisms. Specific guidance on safe air and water management can be found in the *South Australian Public Health (Legionella) Regulations 2013 and the Guidelines for the Control of Legionella in Manufactured Water Systems in South Australia – revised 2013* and the *AS/NZS 3666: 2011 Air-handling and water systems of buildings – Microbial Control, parts 1, 2 and 3*.











#### 4. Implementation and Monitoring

Compliance with all elements of this policy must be demonstrated through completion of scheduled audits of the processes addressed within this document. The audit results and an action plan to address identified deficiencies must be reported to the relevant governance committee.

All risks and hazards associated with the implementation of this policy must be identified, actioned, documented and reported to the Local Health Network’s risk management unit, and the appropriate controls applied.

The effectiveness of the risk controls should be regularly assessed in line with the Local Health Network’s Risk Management Policy.

#### 5. National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards

									
<a href="#">National Standard 1</a>	<a href="#">National Standard 2</a>	<a href="#">National Standard 3</a>	<a href="#">National Standard 4</a>	<a href="#">National Standard 5</a>	<a href="#">National Standard 6</a>	<a href="#">National Standard 7</a>	<a href="#">National Standard 8</a>	<a href="#">National Standard 9</a>	<a href="#">National Standard 10</a>
<a href="#">Governance for Safety and Quality in Health Care</a>	<a href="#">Partnering with Consumers</a>	<a href="#">Preventing &amp; Controlling Healthcare associated infections</a>	<a href="#">Medication Safety</a>	<a href="#">Patient Identification &amp; Procedure Matching</a>	<a href="#">Clinical Handover</a>	<a href="#">Blood and Blood Products</a>	<a href="#">Preventing &amp; Managing Pressure Injuries</a>	<a href="#">Recognising &amp; Responding to Clinical Deterioration</a>	<a href="#">Preventing Falls &amp; Harm from Falls</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Please note the National Standards above apply until 31 December 2018.**

**The National Standards below will be implemented from 1 January 2019.**



<a href="#">National Standard 1</a>	<a href="#">National Standard 2</a>	<a href="#">National Standard 3</a>	<a href="#">National Standard 4</a>	<a href="#">National Standard 5</a>	<a href="#">National Standard 6</a>	<a href="#">National Standard 7</a>	<a href="#">National Standard 8</a>
<a href="#">Clinical Governance</a>	<a href="#">Partnering with Consumers</a>	<a href="#">Preventing &amp; Controlling Healthcare-Associated Infection</a>	<a href="#">Medication Safety</a>	<a href="#">Comprehensive Care</a>	<a href="#">Communicating for Safety</a>	<a href="#">Blood Management</a>	<a href="#">Recognising &amp; Responding to Acute Deterioration</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**National Standard 1:** Governance for Safety and Quality in Health Service Organisations

- > Criterion 1.5: Establishing an organisation-wide risk management system that incorporates identification, assessment, rating, controls and monitoring for patient safety and quality

**National Standard 3:** Preventing and Controlling Healthcare Associated Infections.

- > Criterion 3.15: Using risk management principles to implement systems that maintain a clean and hygienic environment for patients and healthcare workers.

## 6. Definitions

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In the context of this document:

- > **Blood and body fluid means:** blood (including dried blood); all other body substances, secretions and excretions (excluding sweat).
- > **Decontamination means:** disinfection of used articles to make them safe to handle.
- > **Infectious microorganisms means:** microorganisms capable of causing disease, including bacteria, viruses, fungi, protozoa and prions.
- > **Non-critical means:** items that come into contact with intact skin.
- > **Safe handling means:** care is taken to avoid dispersal of microorganisms into the air and environment and to avoid contact with staff clothing.
- > **Sharps means:** any item that can cause percutaneous injury e.g. needles, scalpels, broken glass.

## 7. Associated Policy Directives / Policy Guidelines & Resources

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**Associated policy directives and policy guidelines**

- > SA Health Cleaning Standard for Healthcare Facilities Policy Directive (2018)
- > SA Health Construction and Renovation at Existing Healthcare Facilities: Infection prevention and control Policy Guideline and associated Toolkit (2018)

**State resources**

- > SA Health suite of audit tools (available from SA Health’s Infection Control Service by phone: (08) 7425 7161 or email: [ics@health.sa.gov.au](mailto:ics@health.sa.gov.au))
- > General infection prevention resources are available on the SA Health website: [www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/infectionprevention](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/infectionprevention)
- > State Regulations: Environment Protection (Waste to Resources) Policy 2010, South Australia and Environment Protection Authority 2003: Medical waste – storage, transport and disposal, South Australia.

- > South Australian Public Health (Legionella) Regulations 2013 and the Guidelines for the Control of Legionella in Manufactured Water Systems in South Australia – revised 2013

## References

- > NHMRC. 2010. Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare. Commonwealth of Australia:  
<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/cd33>
- > Standards Australia. AS/NZS 4261:1994/AMDT 1 1997. *Reusable containers for the collection of sharp items used in human and animal medical application*
- > Standards Australia. AS/NZS 4031:1992/AMDT 1 1996. *Non-reusable containers for the collection of sharp medical items used in health care areas*
- > Standards Australia. AS/NZS 4146:2000 *Laundry Practice*
- > Standards Australia. HB 260–2003 *Hospital acquired infections – engineering down the risk.*
- > Standards Australia. AS/NZS 3666.1:2011. *Air-handling and water systems of buildings – Microbial control. Part 1: Design, installation and commissioning.*
- > Standards Australia. AS/NZS 3666.2:2011. *Air-handling and water systems of buildings – Microbial control. Part 2: Operation and maintenance.*
- > Standards Australia. AS/NZS 3666.3:2011. *Air-handling and water systems of buildings – Microbial control. Part 3: Performance-based maintenance of cooling water systems*
- > Standards Australia. AS 1668.2-2012 *The use of ventilation and air conditioning in buildings. Part 2: mechanical ventilation in buildings.*

## 8. Document Ownership & History

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**Document developed by:** Infection Control Service, Communicable Disease Control Branch

**File / Objective No.:**

**Next review due:** 01/06/2023

**Policy history:**

Is this a new policy (V1) **N**

Does this policy amend or update an existing policy version **Y**

If so, which version? V1.1

Does this policy replace another policy with a different title? **Y**

If so, which policy (title)?

*Management of the Healthcare Environment to Minimise the Risk of Transmission of Infection Policy Directive v1.1*

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Approval Date	Version	Who approved New/Revised Version	Reason for Change
22/06/18	V1.2	A/Director, Communicable Disease Control Branch	Formally reviewed in line with 1-5 year scheduled timeline for review. New template & references updated
09/04/15	V1.1	Manager, Infection Control Service	References updated
12/02/15	V1.0	Portfolio Executive	Original approved version.