

IPC Bulletin for GP Practice staff

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Standard infection control precautions (SICPs)

'Safe management of linen' and 'Safe disposal of waste, including sharps'

This is the third in a series of bulletins discussing the SICPs which form the basis of infection prevention and control measures necessary to reduce the risk of transmission of microorganisms from both recognised and unrecognised sources of infection. Each bulletin provides an introduction to 2 of the 10 SICPs. As it is often not possible to tell who has or is carrying an infection, it is essential that all staff apply safe systems of working at every opportunity. The SICPs are recommended for all staff, in all care settings, at all times, for all patients, whether infection is known to be present or not. More information on each of the SICPs can be found at www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk/resources/sicps-tbps-standard-infection-control-precautions-transmission-based-precautions-general-practice/. The SICPs are also covered in more detail in the 'Preventing Infection Workbook: Guidance for General Practice'.

Safe management of linen, including uniforms and workwear

- The use of linen, such as blankets, pillow cases, fabric hand towels, in General Practice is not recommended as it is not practical to launder items between each patient.
- Best practice is to use disposable paper products such as couch roll.
- Fabric curtains and screens should be professionally laundered as per local schedule or immediately if visibly soiled.
- *The Health and Social Care Act 2008: Code of Practice on the prevention and control of infections and related guidance* recommends that clothing/uniform and workwear policies ensure that clothing worn by staff when carrying out their duties should be clean and fit for purpose.

Always:

- ⇒ Wear a clean uniform at the start of each shift and have enough uniforms to facilitate this
- ⇒ Use personal protective equipment such as disposable apron, to prevent contamination of uniform and workwear
- ⇒ All uniforms should be laundered at the highest temperature suitable for the fabric as detailed on the care label

Safe disposal of waste, including sharps

- The management of healthcare waste is an essential part of ensuring that General Practice activities do not pose a risk or potential risk of infection in line with Department of Health and Social Care Guidance.
- Department of Health (2013) *Environment and sustainability Health Technical Memorandum 07-01: Safe management of healthcare waste*, [HTM 07-01 Final.pdf \(england.nhs.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/274000/HTM_07-01_Final.pdf) is the regulatory waste management guidance for health and care settings.
- Health and Safety Executive (2013) [Health and Safety \(Sharp Instruments in Healthcare\) Regulations 2013: A guide for employers and employees HSIS7 \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/literature/HSIS7/) is the regulatory guidance for health and care settings for the safe disposal of sharps.
- Waste is potentially hazardous and, if not disposed of correctly, can result in injury or infection.
- Waste should be disposed of immediately and as close to the point of use as possible.
- Staff have a responsibility for ensuring that waste is dealt with appropriately from the point of generation to the point of final disposal.
- Waste should be placed into the correct segregated colour coded approved waste bag or rigid container if sharp. Sharps containers should conform to UN3291 and British Standard BS7320.
- It remains the legal responsibility of the General Practice, not the waste contractor, to ensure full compliance with environmental waste regulations.



What's new: National infection prevention and control manual for England updated 1st September, 2022, version 2.2 www.england.nhs.uk/publication/national-infection-prevention-and-control/
IPC training event for General Practice: 26 September or 7 November, 2022 @ £150.00 per delegate www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/infection-prevention-and-control-training-event-for-general-practice-tickets-359490043397

Visit our website to find lots of IPC resources, many of which are free to download.
www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk
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