



## **Prisoner Hygiene – Personal, Clothing and Bedding – Appendix 1**

### **Laundry Service Quality Assurance**

#### **Purpose**

This document is a guide for prisons to develop and document a laundry collection, processing and distribution system.

Unwashed linen should be treated as hazardous because it could be contaminated with infectious material or hazardous objects. Once it has been deposited by its owner into the soiled linen receptacle, appropriate personal protective equipment should be worn before it is handled.

#### **Goal**

To deliver a quality laundry service, guided by Australian Standard *AS 4146*, which produces clean hygienic linen in a customer focused and efficient manner.

#### **Collection of Soiled Linen**

Each prison shall develop and document a procedure that meets the needs of the users of the laundry service. Linen laundered in commercial equipment with programmed wash cycles and automatic chemical dispensing, meeting *AS 4146*, opens the possibility of a range of distribution systems including one for one exchange.

#### **Processing**

##### **Receival of items for laundering**

All items for laundering should be received in a manner that they can easily be handled by laundry workers without the risk of injury and keeping contamination to a minimum.

##### **Sorting of soiled items**

Sorting takes place to separate different classes and material composition of the items for washing. The reason is to run the items through the best possible programme for the type of material and degree of soiling. Personal protective equipment should be worn at all times during this process.

##### **Washing**

The washing of the sorted items will be done using the programme best suited to ensure the removal of dirt, grease, oils, bodily fluids and any bacteria or fungal matter in line with *AS 4146*.

Once the clean, hygienic items are removed from the washing machine they should never come into contact with any soiled items or receptacles that have been used to transport

soiled items unless they have been disinfected thoroughly. The general rule is that a separation between clean and soiled linen should be a minimum distance of 2 m.

## **Drying**

Drying must be started within one hour of washing to prevent the growth of bacteria in the wet washing. If this cannot occur for reasons out of normal control the items are to be rewashed as before.

## **Folding**

Folding is done to achieve good presentation of the items and a quality check for items damaged, substandard or still soiled and not acceptable for return to the customers.

## **Distribution**

### **Storing**

Stored items will utilise an area that is dry, secure, and clean with sufficient air flow to prevent bacterial and fungal growth, aid in the reduction of pilfering and prevention of malicious tampering.

### **Despatching**

Laundry for external and internal customers will be bagged or wrapped in plastic to maintain the integrity of the cleaned items, stacked neatly in shipping receptacles with a comprehensive packing list clearly indicating the contents, its destination, customer and the delivery address. This will ensure that the chances of misdirected delivery and wrongly despatched goods are minimal.

### **Distribution**

Returning items for distribution back to units, work shop areas and kitchens will be done in line with individual prisons schedules and transported in locked, clean trolleys to maintain the integrity of the washed items and deliver a professional service to comply with Australian Standard AS 4146.

## **Chemicals**

It is highly recommended that chemicals are automatically dispensed into the machines under programme control. Some industrial chemicals, especially alkaline wash boosters, should not be manually handled because of the risk of injury.

Chemical companies will usually install dispensing equipment where chemicals are purchased from them. Chemical companies will also provide a monitoring service to check that the wash cycles meet the correct chemical concentration and temperature.

Typical chemicals will include:

1. alkali booster and surfactant
2. anionic and/or non-ionic detergent
3. hydrogen peroxide for stain removal and disinfection (looks like water)

4. acidified or sour finishing agent
5. fabric softener and bacteriostatic rinse agent.

## **Equipment**

It is always preferable to use commercial machinery with pre-programmed wash cycles and automatic chemical dispensing because this controlled environment ensures that *AS 4146* conditions exist in the washing of the linen. Domestic style machines are much inferior because they do not drain fully and therefore can transfer pathogens from one wash to the next and the temperature and chemicals are user inputs resulting in less certainty of settings.

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