Greetings NCAHCP Members

Greetings

We, the North Carolina Association for Central Service Professionals, hope that our summer meeting held in Winston Salem was informative, educational, and fun.

On behalf of the board of directors and myself, we are very much looking forward to our fall meeting in November. Please check the website for the meeting’s brochure.

Also, we hope that everyone has a great Central Service week.

Sincerely,

Ann Thomas
President
Quality Assurance with Rigid Containers
Katrina Simpson, M.A., CST, CSPDT

Objectives:
Discuss various quality assurance issues regarding rigid containers.
Discuss measures CSS personnel can take to initiate infection control.
Discuss rigid container reprocessing concerns.
Discuss the components of the rigid container.

Where are my filters?
Look at the picture above. What is the first thing that you notice incorrect about this picture? You guessed it, no filter! Dr. Thompson, a prestigious vascular surgeon at New ABC Hospital brings in millions of dollars a year to the hospital. One day, a trauma comes through the operating doors, the OR has been busy with vascular procedures all day. The only “sterilized” AAA set that can be used for this
emergency procedure is sent up from the Sterile Processing Department to the operating room. The patient is intubated, put to sleep, and prepped for surgery. The scrub tech goes to reach for the “sterilized” AAA container, lifts the instruments out of the rigid container, and immediately realizes that the bottom filter is missing out of the container. What should the technician do? The patient is minutes away from a fatality. Should the operating room team proceed and use the unsterile instruments? There is no easy response to these questions. It would not be ideal for the technician to use these instruments on the patient because they could furthermore complicate any underlying issues the patient may have. “The use of inadequately sterilized critical items represents a high risk of transmitting pathogens, documented transmission of pathogens associated with an inadequately sterilized critical item” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2008, para 2). The best thing the technician could do in this situation is request similar instruments to get the case started, and utilize the Immediate Use Steam Sterilizer to process any additional instruments that may be needed for the case. The patient should always be the primary concern for the surgical team, and yes, that include sterile processing.
Other QA concerns

Unfortunately, missing filters are not the only concern regarding rigid containers. There are numerous components to the rigid container. The CS technician must be familiar with the anatomy of the rigid container before handling it. Rigid containers can have a solid or perforated bottom, a container lid, gasket, latching mechanism, ID tags, appropriate sized instrument basket, filter retention plates, two handles, and a load card holder (Chobin, 2013. Pp 197-198). It is important that all of these components are working appropriately to initiate effective sterilization. Rigid containers must be thoroughly cleaned and dried before allowing assembled surgical instruments to be placed within the tray. Excess moisture can contribute to wet loads, which furthermore, contribute to instrument recalls. To ensure effective sterilization, it is important for rigid containers containing both a perforated top and bottom to be sterilized in Ozone, Low-Temperature Gas Plasma, Ethylene Oxide or Gravity sterilization cycles. This is important to ensure adequate steam penetration and air-removal. Containers with a perforated top and solid bottom can be placed in Dynamic-Air removal cycles. All filters used must be of correct size. It is inappropriate to cut filters to fit the perforations on the container. Before sterilizing anything in a rigid container, the weight of the set should not exceed 25 pounds. “AAMI ST77:2005, “Containment devices for reusable medical device sterilization,” addresses the weight issue of a containment device, the instruments, and any accessories or wrappers, and recommends that the combined maximum weight should not exceed 25 pounds” (Case Medical, 2006). Excessive weight within the tray can contribute to ineffective sterilization.
Is the appropriate chemical indicator contained within the set? It is not only important to check filters, but also inspect to verify that the appropriate chemical indicator is placed within the instrument set before the instrument is sterilized.

Technicians must also make sure that any packaging material that can be utilized to serve as a barrier and package for sterilized equipment is not contained within the rigid container, ex: single-use wrappers, paper-plastic pouches.

**How do we fix these QA concerns?**

There are often times within the sterile processing department in which the staff can get exceptionally busy and overwhelmed in which errors are increased. Regardless of how busy the Sterile Processing Department may become, it is never okay to take short cuts or allow even one error to occur. Central Sterile Processing is truly the heart of the hospital. One error can cause a sentinel event, and in rare cases death being the ultimate occurrence. Therefore, it is imperative for each CS department to have quality assurance policies in place to avoid such incidences. Look at the list below to see what measures CS technicians can take in order to ensure that filters and other mechanisms of the rigid container are checked before they get to the operating room.
Have CS personnel place filters in rigid containers as soon as they are decontaminated and dried and double check that the filter retention plates are secured
Add verification of filters for rigid containers on instrument inventory sheets
Double check that the appropriate chemical indicator is within the set, e.g., steam indicators for steam, gas chemical indicators for gas sterilization cycles
Have the CS technician running the sterilizer verify that all rigid containers have filters on the top and bottom, when necessary, locking mechanisms, load card holders, and tray ID name tags before sterilization
Verify that dents or other noticeable damage is not present in the containers (this can prevent proper sterilization by allowing air to enter the set)
Ensure that all rigid containers being utilized have a 510(k) clearance administered through the FDA (This information can be verified through the manufacturer’s instructions for the device)

It is imperative that the CS professional is aware and educated about various quality assurance issues regarding the usage of rigid containers. Rigid containers are ideal for sterilizing a large amount and variety of surgical instruments for various specialties. When processed correctly, they provide excellent barriers to pathogens, which can ultimately help to reduce the risk of a hospital acquired infection by utilizing improperly sterilized medical equipment to the surgical patient.

References
Dear Steamy

Question, - Is it ok to use clear clean trash bags as dust covers to store or transport sterile trays?

Answer - The answer is **NO**, according to AAMI, “Sterility maintenance covers may be used to protect and extend the shelf life of properly packaged and sterilized items that could be subjected to environmental challenges or multiple handling before use. Only products specifically labeled as sterility maintenance covers should be used for this purpose”.

The maintenance cover should be sealed by one of the following methods:
- Heat sealer designed to seal plastic or a self-sealing cover.

For confirmation of the information above see AAMI ST 79 sterile storage section 8.9.1

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Question, - How often should a washer disinfector or an ultra-sonic cleaner be tested?

Answer, - The first test should be upon installation for validation of the machine. The following routine test should be as follows.

- Change of cleaning chemistry
  - After any major repair (i.e. replacement of water pump, detergent delivery system) any repair outside of routine maintenance Weekly or daily depending upon policy of the facility
- For more details see AAMI ST79 section 7.5.3.3 Mechanical cleaning

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Steamy
A Quality Assurance with Rigid Containers
Post-Test 2015

1. It is recommended to use non-sterile instruments on the surgical patient in the case of an emergency.
   TRUE FALSE

2. Items not sterilized can result in an increased risk of pathogen transmission.
   TRUE FALSE

3. All components of the rigid container must be in working order and not damaged.
   TRUE FALSE

4. Rigid containers containing both a perforated top and bottom must be placed in in Dynamic-Air removal cycles for sterilization.
   TRUE FALSE

5. Instrument sets must exceed 25 pounds in order to be processed in rigid containers.
   TRUE FALSE

6. It is necessary to package scissors in paper-plastic pouches before placing them into rigid containers.
   TRUE FALSE

7. Missing filters are not the only quality assurance concern with rigid containers.
   TRUE FALSE

8. Overwhelmed staff does not contribute to errors being made in CSS.
   TRUE FALSE

9. It is okay to place a chemical indicator within a set, which is intended for steam sterilization in an ethylene oxide cycle.
   TRUE FALSE

10. Rigid containers should have a 501(k) clearance through the AAMI.
    TRUE FALSE

To receive one contact hour complete the quiz after reading the article and send the quiz only, via normal mail to:
    Lana Haecherl
    PO Box 568
    Pineville, NC 28134

DO NOT SEND QUIZ CERTIFIED
Your certificate will be sent via email if your score is greater than 70%. If you are not a member of NCAHCSP, please include a fee of $20.00 along with your Membership Application, found on the website (www.ncahcsp.org). Please allow at least six weeks for processing.

CEU Expiration Date: September 30, 2020

PRINT NAME: ________________________________
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PROCLAMATION OF APPRECIATION

Central Service and Sterile Processing Professionals

On the occasion of the 2015 Central Service Week,
OCTOBER 11 -17, 2015
as a Week of Celebration.

We proclaim to the world,
as well as to the local community,
our appreciation for your dedication
to the profession and service to patients in every hospital.

We pray that blessings be abundant in your life.

Ann Thomas

NCAH CSP, President
The following information is not based on any statistical measurement or formal studies, but solely based on my years of experience in building and fostering healthy working relationships with Central Service Technicians that I have had the pleasure of working with and managing.

Following these suggestions from A-Z to help keep you focused and on course to be a successful and professional technician.

**Accountable:**

Hold yourself and your teammates **Accountable** for the high quality and quantities of work that you all produce each and everyday within your departments.

**Build Relationships along the way:**

You don’t have to be everyone’s friend, but you do have to build **Relationships** with your teammates.

**Communicate:**

Strong, healthy, professional **Communication** helps to build trust, respect and confidence.

**Dedicate:**

Be **Dedicated** to your job and your role as a teammate. Make a difference each day

**Educate:**

Share and be willing to help **Educate** your teammates that you work with each and every day.

**Flexibility:**

Learn and master being **Flexible** to help get the job done and done right.

**Give:**

**Give** and share your ideas and suggestions with your teammates and leaders at your facility.

**Honesty:**

Be **Honest** and forthright in your day to day work habits. Bring your “A” game every day to work.

**Input:**

Give your **Input**, share ideas and suggestions on how to make a positive impact on your day to day contributions as it relates to positive patient outcomes.

**Just:**

Be **Just** in your dealings with customers and fellow teammates.

**Knowledge:**

If you do not **Know** something, learn, ask questions.

**Laugh:**

Working in Central Service is a high stressed job. Take time to **LOL**

**Mentor:**

Take time to **Mentor** and teach a teammate something new.

**Never lose sight of your department goal:**

Take time to know your department goals inside and out. Attempt each day to help reach the goal.

**Organization:**

Be **Organized** with your work.

**Positive Attitude:**

If you demonstrate and show a **Positive Attitude**, it will be contagious!
Quality / Quantity:

Strive each day to produce high Quality and high Quantities of work.

Respect:

Showing and demonstrating simple Respect will go a long way.

Service:

Providing Exceptional customer Service should always be one of your primary goals.

Trust:

Trust is something that is earned. Trust yourself and Trust your teammates as well.

Unconventional:

Be creative think outside of the box. Be Unconventional and innovative.

Vision:

Know and practice your part in knowing your facility Vision statement. Know who you are, and where you are headed.

Welcoming:

Be Welcoming and let your teammates know that you are glad to be full present and on the same team with them.

Avoid Xenophobia:

Do not be afraid of what is foreign to you. Try something new!

Yean to do it Right:

Do your very best each and every day. Give 110% each day! Aim to do it Right the first time!!!

Zeal:

Show all those around you that you love coming to work and it just might rub off on some others. Let the Zeal inside of you be shown each day.

Respectfully submitted by:

Patricia A. Galmon
NCAHCS Board of Directors
Angel Spaghetti Salad

16 oz angel hair spaghetti broken into 4 pieces each. Cook, rinse in cool water, and drain.

Mix the following
4 TBS oil
3 TBS lemon juice
1 TBS Accent seasoning
2 TBS Lowry's seasoning

Pour over spaghetti, cover and refrigerate for 2 days, stirring several times.

Before serving add
1 c chopped celery
½ c chopped green peppers
½ c chopped black olives
1 c chopped onions
1 ½ c mayo

This is one of my favorite pot luck dishes.

It is so easy to make ahead of time.

Submitted by
Judith Carey
North Carolina Association for Hospital Central Service Professionals will establish itself statewide as the leading educational organization through innovative programs that enhance the development of the Central Service Professionals.

Thank you to our vendors that support the NCAH CSP
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