



# **CARE HOME LAUNDRY** **REGULATIONS**

**Miele**

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# Introduction

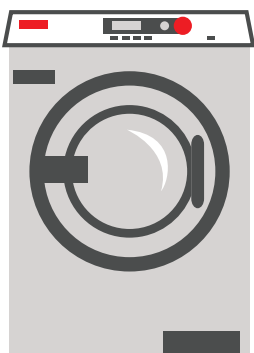
In 1995, the Department of Health issued a set of Health Service Guidelines entitled HSG (95)18, which outlined laundry arrangements for used and infected linen. For the next 18 years, these management executive guidelines would be the go-to reference guide when discussing laundry requirements in a social care environment.

Now, after all those years, a new document suite has been created. The Department of Health's Choice framework for local Policy and Procedures 01-04 provides up-to-date evidence-based guidance on the decontamination of linen for health and social care.

The new comprehensive guidelines are divided into four 'volumes' which cover all aspects of linen processing from equipment validation to management and procurement.

But what does that mean for you? Well, in order to comply with government regulations, you'll now need to adhere to the essential quality requirements mentioned in the CFPP 01-04 guide.

To help you understand these updates, we've created this ebook which outlines the changes that specifically affect the care home industry and how they can be implemented into your everyday processes.



# Essential quality requirements and best practice

In the social care-specific volume of CFPP 01-04, the Department of Health has made an effort to improve the standards of linen processing by introducing benchmarks which require compliance and demonstration.

These benchmarks are divided into two categories:

- Essential Quality Requirements (EQR)
- Best Practice

The Essential Quality Requirements (EQR) mentioned throughout CFPP 01-04 refer to all existing statutory and regulatory requirements. These are the foundation of the guidelines and are the minimum requirements for compliance.

Having achieved minimum compliance, 01-04 also outlines a Best Practice approach - enhancements to the standard requirements. The premise behind this thinking is that every care home/nursing home etc should be achieving EQR and striving to achieve best practice at every opportunity. In the CFPP 01-04 document, best practice benchmarks are highlighted in bolded text.

The number of people over 85  
in the UK is predicted to  
double in the next 20 years and  
nearly treble in the next 30

x3

## Linen processing requirements

When processing linen in a care home environment, the following steps and procedures should be implemented in order to achieve the Essential Quality Requirements of CFPP 01-04.

- A logbook of any service and repair visits should be kept for all washing machines and dryers. There should also be a document outlining policies within the care home and all safe working procedures. Both the outline document and logbook should be available for inspection at all times
- Processes should be safe and protect staff and service-users against exposure to infection
- Organisations that regularly use the enhanced process (discussed later in this ebook) should undertake a risk analysis of their processes
- Appropriate personal protective equipment (including appropriate clothing and eye protection) should be available for all staff
- Processed linen should be stored in a clean area above floor level and should not be kept in the laundry area
- The laundry area should be designed to minimise the risk of recontamination of linen and to ensure the protection of service-users and staff involved in the handling of used linen. This should include:
  1. procedural segregation of clean and dirty items/areas within the laundry room
  2. hand decontamination facilities including a wash-hand basin, liquid soap, disposable paper towels, pedal-operated clinical and domestic waste receptacles and a first-aid kit
  3. a safe and segregated dirty area for the removal of solids and sluicing

The laundry area should be designed to minimise the risk of recontamination of linen and to ensure the protection of service-users and staff involved in the handling of used linen.

## Best practice linen processing requirements

The points mentioned in the previous section are the minimum requirements/guidelines for safely processing linen in a care home/ social care environment. But in order to achieve 'best practice' levels, there are more in-depth procedures to implement:

Firstly, an industrial/commercial-type washing machine capable of meeting the disinfection requirements mentioned in 'Disinfection of linen' within the 'Management and Provision' volume is required.

Once a washing machine (as mentioned previously) is procured, it must then be capable of carrying out a hot wash in line with CFPP 01-04 recommendations - 71°C for at least three minutes or 65°C for at least ten minutes. If a hot wash is not appropriate (due to the material not being able to withstand washes at high temperatures) a chemical disinfection process may be adopted as long as it meets the requirements of 'Disinfection of Linen'.

The washing machine's disinfection stage must be validated at least once per year to prove it meets the requirements above (in accordance with the 'Schedule of periodic tests' within the 'Engineering, Equipment and Validation' volume). It is likely that an external validation contractor or the machine manufacturer would need to undertake these tests on behalf of the organisation.

When disinfection is required, there should be a separate designated laundry area specific for that purpose, and a workflow/procedure in place to ensure soiled/fouled linen is physically separated throughout the process. When the 'enhanced process' is used, the laundry area should only be accessible by staff performing laundry duties.

If the enhanced process is used regularly, organisations should implement procedures whereby the manual handling/opening of infectious linen is minimised (for example, through the use of water-soluble bags).

of family members  
would recommend  
their loved one's  
care home

**74%**

# Safe handling of dirty laundry

In a care home environment all dirty linen should be handled with care; and attention paid to the potential spread of infection. All staff members working within the laundry should be given personal protection equipment (PPE) such as plastic aprons and suitable gloves when handling dirty or contaminated clothing or bedding.

Linen should be carefully removed from a service-user's bed and placed in an appropriate container according to the segregation category (discussed in the next part of this ebook). Any linen or personal clothing should also be carefully removed and placed in the designated bag, not placed on the floor.

When handling dirty laundry, soiled or fouled linen, it should not be held close to the chest as this could potentially contaminate the employee's uniform (an apron should be worn).

Any segregation required prior to washing should be carried out before transport to the laundry area; this removes the need for additional handling within the laundry. Staff members should never empty bags of linen onto the floor to sort the linen into categories – this presents an unnecessary risk of infection. Many care homes currently use water-soluble bags within cotton sacks in a wheeled trolley to facilitate this separation; keeping linen off the floor before taking the bags to the laundry.

The care home manager and laundry staff should be satisfied that the process of handling dirty laundry meets decontamination guidelines set out in the CFPP 01-04 documents.



All staff members working within the laundry should be given personal protection equipment (PPE) such as plastic aprons and suitable gloves.

## Categorisation and segregation of linen

In a simple care home environment, laundry processes can be split into two distinct categories; each of which has an identifying colour:

- Standard process – off white or white. Soiled and fouled items should be placed into a water-soluble bag(s) (and additionally within a white cotton sack if required) or alternatively placed directly in a white impermeable bag. Heavily soiled items should have any solids removed prior to being placed into the bag.
- Enhanced process – red. These items should be sealed in a red water-soluble bag immediately on removal from the bed. This primary container should then be placed in an impermeable or nylon/polyester bag. Additionally, the outer bag must carry a bold legend stating “Infectious linen”.

The next section of this ebook will discuss the processing of linen within the parameters of the standard and enhanced processes; explaining both the EQR and best practice benchmarks which need to be achieved for both.

Laundry processes can be split into two distinct categories: Standard process or Enhanced process



## Care home linen processing EQR

Meeting the Essential Quality Requirements (EQR) of the standard process in a care home environment is relatively simple. It is generally comparable to the soiled or fouled definition used in the 'Management and provision' volume of CFPP 01-04 - items should be washed at the highest possible temperature in a commercial washing machine.

The process changes when triggers are identified which relate to the possibility of infectious linen or clothing being generated. When this is the case, care homes must implement the enhanced process for laundry. Example triggers which indicate the need for the enhanced process include:

- Unexplained diarrhoea and vomiting
- Confirmed infection
- Unexplained rashes
- Confirmed cases of scabies/lice
- Unexplained fever

During the enhanced process, laundry must be performed in a machine appropriate for the standard process, but using a cycle with a minimum temperature of 60°C, or the highest temperature suitable for heat-sensitive items. This will only adhere to the essential quality requirements though...



Items should be washed at the highest possible temperature in a commercial washing machine



## Care home linen processing best practice

In order to achieve best practice, all washing cycles in the enhanced process must have either a thermal disinfection cycle that reaches 71°C for at least three minutes/65°C for at least ten minutes; or a chemical disinfection process that satisfies the requirements in the section 'Disinfection of linen' (in the 'Management and provision' volume of CFPP 01-04).

Best practice laundry processes also need to ensure that:

- All linen/clothing should enter the laundry through the appropriate dirty entrance and should not be stored but processed as soon as possible
- The laundry staff should never open any inner water-soluble bags. Instead, the bags should be transferred to the washing machine for decontamination
- Washing machines should not be overloaded
- Heavily soiled items should also have a pre-wash/sluice cycle selected
- Heat sensitive items should be washed at the highest temperature possible for the item
- Once all items are dry, they should be stored in a clean area above floor level and not kept in the laundry area

By investing in a commercial washing machine you would potentially have all of the necessary programs/settings/features etc needed to achieve best practice linen processing in your care home (not including any manual handling or staff processes/input).

Wash for at least  
3 minutes with a  
thermal disinfection  
process

**71°C**

# Conclusion

To make sure your care home laundry fully adheres to the requirements of CFPP 01-04, be sure to read the entire suite of documents and implement the necessary changes/updates. This ebook is simply key information collated from the most relevant parts of the guidelines.

Links to the four volumes of the CFPP can be found here:

- Management and provision
- Engineering, equipment and validation
- Social care
- Guidance for linen processors implementing European standard BS EN 14065

When running, operating or managing a care home, the priority is always to provide service-users with the highest level of care. Now, although a washing machine and tumble dryer may not have a direct affect on this, indirectly they ensure service-users remain safe and in no threat from infection/contamination. They allow service-users to sleep soundly on bedding which has been cleaned and disinfected to the highest standard. And more importantly, they enable processes to be streamlined so staff can spend less time doing laundry and more time providing first-class care to those who need it most.

When reading CFPP 01-04, be sure to endeavour to meet all requirements, and where possible, aim to achieve a best practice approach to your laundry arrangements.

### Want to find out more?

If you'd like to discuss the legislation and regulations of running a care home, or how laundry equipment can improve the service you provide to your residents, please feel free to contact us on 0845 643 0256 and we'll be happy to help.

Visit us at: [www.mieleprofessional.co.uk](http://www.mieleprofessional.co.uk)