

How Safe is Your Medical Laundry Program and Provider?

Keep Patients & Staff Safe
with Accredited Medical
Laundering as You Reopen

AN EBOOK FROM
NIXON MEDICAL

NIXON
M E D I C A L

Foreward

The outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) in the United States caused many non-urgent healthcare organizations and outpatient facilities to close their doors for months. Now, as the nation cautiously reopens, these organizations must assess their safety protocols to ensure the health and safety of patients and staff. Your reopening plan should center on two objectives:

- 1 Putting the wellbeing of patients and staff first
- 2 Making patients and staff feel comfortable at your facility

“When the first wave of this pandemic is behind us, the pent-up patient demand for surgical and procedural care may be immense, and healthcare organizations, physicians, and nurses must be prepared to meet this demand.”

This joint quote from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the U.S. Surgeon General, and many medical specialties, such as the American College of Surgeons and the American Society of Anesthesiologists, **urges outpatient centers to get organized prior to reopening and be diligent about formalizing safety protocols that will impact the wellbeing and comfort levels of staff and patients.**

What's Inside

This eBook focuses on the safety protocols you should adhere to for medical apparel and linen laundering as you reopen and beyond.

Medical apparel and linens, like scrubs, patient gowns, sheets, blankets, and towels are necessary supplies for treating patients safely. However, these supplies are highly susceptible to cross-contamination and the spread of infectious outbreaks if not handled and laundered properly.

Use the contents of this eBook to assess your facility's laundering protocols and implement an accredited program that will keep your patients and staff safe.

[Common Medical Laundry Risks](#)

[HLAC-Accredited Laundry Services](#)

[Compliant Laundry Techniques](#)

[Inside Look at Medical Laundering](#)

[Contact-Free Laundry Services](#)

[Laundry Vendor Safety Tips](#)

[Summary and Key Takeaways](#)

[Does Your Program Meet These Protocols?](#)

[About Nixon Medical](#)

Common Medical Laundry Risks

Outpatient facilities have a choice when it comes to laundering their medical apparel and linens: operate an on-premise laundry facility or outsource the laundry to a vendor. While on-premise laundry is not recommended by the Healthcare Laundry Accreditation Council (HLAC), some healthcare facilities still choose this option which can pose challenges and risks if proper safety protocols are not adhered to.

Risks of improper handling of medical laundry:

- Exposing staff and patients to bloodborne pathogens and other hazards
- Spreading infectious diseases to staff, patients, and subsequent family members
- Risking cross-contamination between clean and soiled apparel and linens

Avoiding these high-risk scenarios for your patients and staff is not only important, but requires a comprehensive medical laundering program that carefully considers every precaution, including:

- Minimal handling of soiled apparel and linens
- Bagging of soiled linens in the location in which they are used
- Use of biohazard labeled containers at the location of use
- Use of plastic leak-proof bags for containment and transportation
- Use of labeling or color-coding to distinguish clean linens from soiled linens
- Proper holding of contaminated laundry bags to avoid accidental punctures
- Use of proper storage solutions for laundry inventory systems and storage





HLAC–Accredited Laundry Services



The Healthcare Laundry Accreditation Council (HLAC) is a nonprofit organization that inspects and accredits laundries that process reusable textiles for healthcare facilities.

What it means to be HLAC–accredited:

HLAC accreditation means that a laundry meets HLAC Accreditation Standards, which have been developed based on federal regulations and best industry practices. It affirms that a healthcare laundry organization has passed an inspection of its facility, policies, procedures, and training programs.

Why your facility should use an HLAC–accredited laundry service:

HLAC–accredited laundering means that soiled products are being laundered at an off-site accredited facility, and not taken home or laundered on-site.

- Meet CDC, OSHA, APIC, & Joint Commission Standards
- Eliminate risk of cross–contamination
- Use state–of–the–art laundering techniques
- Feature healthcare–specific facilities and delivery vehicles
- Provide your clinicians and patients with peace of mind
- Ensure maximum sanitation and safety of your apparel and linens

IS YOUR LAUNDRY SERVICE HLAC–ACCREDITED?

YES

NO

Compliant Laundry Techniques

Whether your laundry service is HLAC-accredited or not, it is important to follow compliant laundering techniques that meet requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC).

Compliant laundering techniques include:

- Maintaining exposure control plans
- Meeting bloodborne pathogens requirements
- Enforcing facility cleaning policies and procedures
- Maintaining laundry facility statements
- Meeting specific laundering temperatures
- Utilizing specific wash formulas
- Meeting specific process times
- Maintaining titration reports
- Enforcing universal precautions requirements

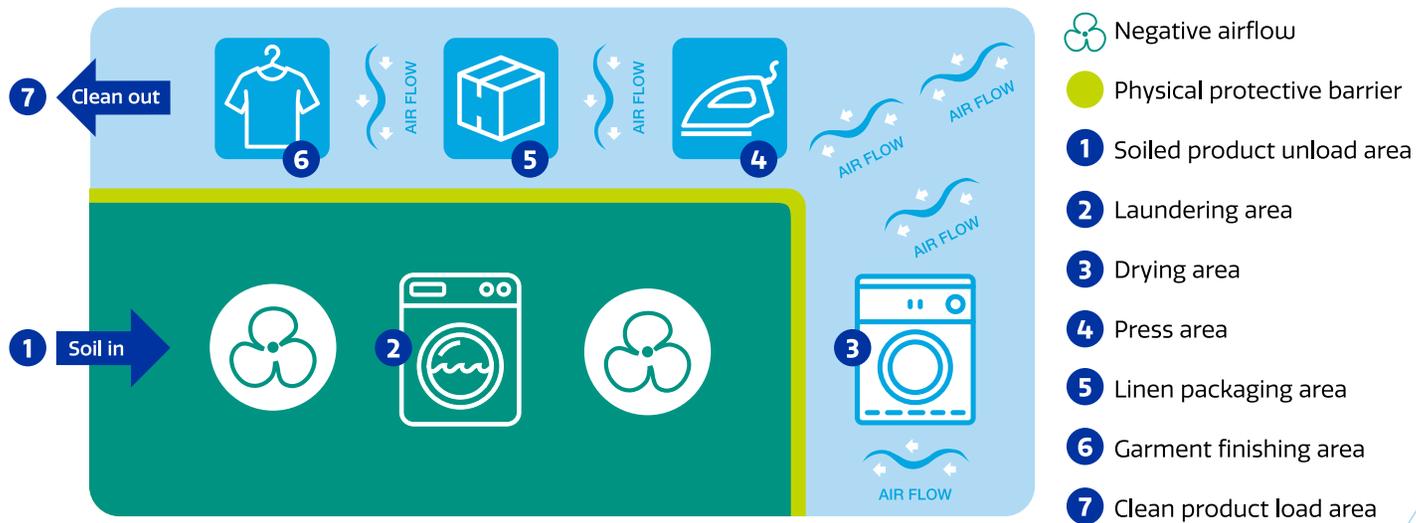
ARE YOU USING COMPLIANT LAUNDERING TECHNIQUES?

YES **NO**



Inside Look at Medical Laundering

In this Diagram, you will see how an advanced medical laundering facility operates. The laundering workflow eliminates the risks of cross contamination through negative airflow and the physical separation of soiled and clean product in both the facility and delivery vehicles.



DOES YOUR LAUNDERING FACILITY FOLLOW THIS WORKFLOW?

YES **NO**



Contact-Free Laundry Services

Laundry service vendors who come in and out of your facility to pick-up soiled apparel and linens, deliver and restock fresh ones, and manage your inventory should make changes to their protocols to limit touchpoints and exposure.

How laundry vendors should practice contact-free service:

- Enter through a side or back entrance
- Contact you upon arrival and/or provide a specific arrival time to allow for preparation
- Keep products wrapped, including with heat-sealed packaging, for maximum sanitation
- Schedule inventory checks for when staff is off-site to avoid close contact
- Utilize technology or notes to flag questionable garments for future exchange
- Use your approved communication methods like Zoom, Skype, phone, and text

IS YOUR LAUNDRY SERVICE PRACTICING CONTACT-FREE SERVICE?

YES

NO

Laundry Vendor Safety Tips

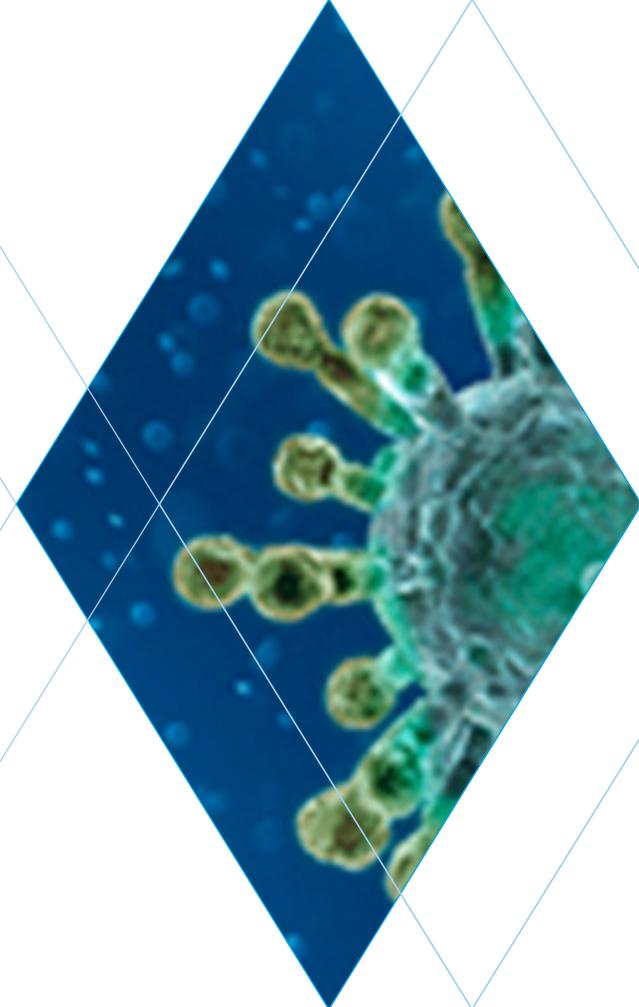
While the nation's reopening indicates that the spread of COVID-19 has significantly decreased in your region, it is still important, to practice safety measures. Your staff, patients, and most importantly, vendors who are coming in and out of your facility, should practice social distancing and wear appropriate personal protective equipment.

How you can implement these safety protocols:

- Ask your vendors to screen the health of their mobile workforce each day
- Ensure your vendors treat all soiled items as though they are infected
- Discuss alternative delivery times with your vendors, such as after hours
- Require vendors to wash their hands upon arrival at your facility
- Reinforce social distancing and ensure they wear face masks and gloves
- Avoid signing hand-held PDAs or reusing pens to sign for deliveries

DO YOUR STAFF, PATIENTS, AND VENDORS KNOW TO DO THIS?

YES NO



Summary and Key Takeaways

Non-urgent healthcare centers and outpatient facilities have a responsibility to implement every safety measure possible to support the wellbeing and comfort of patients and staff as they reopen. Proper medical laundering and safe service from vendors is tantamount to ensuring everyone's safety.

It is possible to avoid the common challenges of medical laundry that put your patients and staff at risk of being exposed to bloodborne pathogens, infectious diseases, and cross contamination.

HLAC-accredited laundering means soiled products are being laundered at an off-site accredited facility, and not taken home or laundered on-site, which could put people at risk.

Compliant laundry techniques meet the requirements of various institutions and consider many protocols, including water temperatures, formulas, process times, reporting, and more.

Contact-free service should be implemented by your laundry vendor to limit touchpoints and exposure to staff and patients.

Safety measures beyond contact-free service should be practiced by vendors who are coming in and out of your facility.

Did You Answer Yes or No to Most of the Questions?

If you answered NO to some or most of these questions, take time to learn about your options.

It is important that your medical laundry program meets the safety protocols discussed in this eBook as you reopen and do everything you can to support the wellbeing and comfort of your patients and staff.

We Can Help.

Nixon Medical is a leading service provider of medical linens and apparel serving outpatient healthcare centers nationwide. We provide trusted medical apparel and linen rental services, HLAC-accredited laundering services, expert inventory management, and custom and reliable service.

We are proud of our **All About Service™** reputation, and now we are proud to be All About Safety too, implementing and optimizing all of the safety protocols discussed in this eBook.

Need to Switch to an Accredited Medical Laundering Provider?

Contact us to discuss your
medical apparel and linen inventory
needs or to receive a quote.

nixonmedical.com

[\(866\) 300-8870](tel:8663008870)

info@nixonmedical.com

NIXON
M E D I C A L

All About Service™

SINCE 1967

©2020 Nixon Medical. All Rights Reserved