


Guideline Implementation: Surgical Instrument Cleaning

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Purpose/Goal

To provide the learner with knowledge specific to implementing the updated AORN "Guideline for cleaning and care of surgical instruments."

Objectives

1. Explain the importance of processing surgical instruments correctly.
2. Describe steps that should be performed intraoperatively to prepare instruments for disinfection.
3. Describe the steps in the decontamination process.
4. Identify heating, ventilation, and air conditioning parameters (HVAC) specific to the decontamination area.
5. Identify special precautions to observe during instrument processing.

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Ms Cowperthwaite and Ms Holm have no declared affiliations that could be perceived as posing potential conflicts of interest in the publication of this article.

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ABSTRACT

Cleaning, decontaminating, and handling instructions for instruments vary widely based on the type of instrument and the manufacturer. Processing instruments in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions can help prevent damage and keep devices in good working order. Most importantly, proper cleaning and disinfection may prevent transmission of pathogenic organisms from a contaminated device to a patient or health care worker. The updated AORN "Guideline for cleaning and care of surgical instruments" provides guidance on cleaning, decontaminating, transporting, inspecting, and storing instruments. This article focuses on key points of the guideline to help perioperative personnel implement appropriate instrument care protocols in their practice settings. The key points address timely cleaning and decontamination of instruments after use; appropriate heating, ventilation, and air conditioning parameters for the decontamination area; processing of ophthalmic instruments and laryngoscopes; and precautions to take with instruments used in cases of suspected prion disease. Perioperative RNs should review the complete guideline for additional information and for guidance when writing and updating policies and procedures. *AORN J* 101 (May 2015) 543-549. © AORN, Inc, 2015. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.aorn.2015.03.005>

Key words: *cleaning, decontamination, HVAC, ophthalmic instruments, laryngoscopes, prion diseases.*

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