



Adult Social Care

Laundry Procedure

Version 1

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If you would like to make any comments, amendments, additions etc please email

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Introduction

This procedure provides guidance for anyone who is using the onsite laundry facility within Derbyshire County Council establishments.

Although the risk of acquiring an infection from used laundry is low, these guidelines have been produced to ensure that any risk is kept to an absolute minimum.

All staff who are expected to carry out laundry duties will need to have completed a full induction to the process and the machines, the checklist must be completed to evidence this.

Laundry Room

The onsite laundry is to launder resident clothing, towels and staff workwear.

The internal door from the laundry to the residential homes must always be kept closed and secure, and not propped open, to ensure compliance with fire safety regulations.

The laundry room ventilation must be maintained in a clean and effective state.

There must be a clear flow and physical separation of soiled to clean items, the signs must be used in the laundry to identify these areas:

- [soiled linen hire storage](#)
- [soiled waiting to be washed](#)
- [fresh laundry and ironed clothes](#)

Clean items must not pass back through the 'soiled waiting to be washed' area.

Ensure the appropriate wall charts and task cards are followed.

Cleaning the Laundry Room

The registered manager must ensure the cleaning schedule for the laundry room is followed. This must include all horizontal surfaces being damp dusted daily.

Any bodily fluid spillage must be cleaned immediately according to the body spillage task card.

Ensure appropriate domestic and cleaning guidance is followed by referring to the domestic handbook.

Infection Control

Staff handling laundry must follow infection prevention and control procedures.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) must be worn when handling unwashed items and staff need to follow the appropriate donning, doffing, and in the case of an infection, disposal process.

Hands must be washed and dried thoroughly using the safe handwashing technique, when staff leave the laundry and before they start their next task.

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Staff must ensure any skin lesions are covered with a waterproof dressing before handling clean laundry.

Laundry Process

The laundry process comprises several stages, an overview of this is shown in [Appendix 1](#), the Laundry Process Flow Chart

Marking

Residents' clothes, and other garments that are laundered, must be marked or labelled with the resident's name in a discreet manner using one of the following methods:

- marking pen
- sew on label or iron on label provided by the person

Collecting

Gloves and aprons must be worn when handling laundry.

Staff must take the linen trolley and red soluble bags with them when collecting soiled laundry. The linen bag, which is attached to the trolley, is for soiled laundry, and the red soluble bags are for foul or infected laundry only (see enhanced process below).

Soiled or fouled linen must not be held close to the chest, to prevent contamination of the uniform.

Personal clothing must be removed with care and placed in the bag, do not place laundry on the floor.

Any segregation required must be done at this stage, removing the need for any additional handling. Linen must never be emptied onto the floor to sort, as this presents an unnecessary risk of infection.

Bed linen must be removed from a resident's bed with care and placed in an appropriate container for transport to the contracted laundering service.

Sorting/Colour Coding

Sorting the laundry correctly is essential to obtaining a good washing result. It is the responsibility of the person handling the linen to sort appropriately using colour coded bags.

Foul or infected laundry is items contaminated with body fluids. Solid matter must be removed before placing this into a red soluble bag. This linen must not be further sorted prior to washing, the red bag is placed into the washer.

Soiled laundry is used, but not contaminated with body fluids. This must be placed in a white linen bag, and sorted before washing according to the following list:

- washing symbols
- check the washing symbols in the garments, a guide to garment care labels

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can be found at [Appendix 2](#).

- if there are no washing symbols sort the laundry by the type of textile
- colour of the laundry
- white and light-coloured items can be washed together, dark-coloured items can be washed together. Pay attention to the label for any information on colour bleeding

Washing

If the machines are 'self-dosing' check that there is enough product in each container. If the machines are 'dosing by hand' ensure the correct amount of product.

Red soluble bag laundry must be placed directly into the washing machine. Other soiled laundry must be stored in the designated area, separate from any clean laundry.

Laundry must be washed on the appropriate cycle, at the highest suitable temperature according to the garment care label. To achieve the best wash results, load the washer to its maximum capacity.

Enhanced Process

Where there is a confirmed or potential case of infection the enhanced process must be used.

All linen must not be sorted but washed as soon as possible. Water soluble bags must not be opened, they must be transferred straight into the washing machine.

A pre-wash or sluice cycle must be used for heavily soiled laundry.

In order to achieve disinfection, the wash cycle must reach either 65° for a minimum of 10 minutes, or 71° for 3 minutes.

Heat sensitive items must be washed at the highest temperature possible for them.

Washing machines must not be overloaded.

Tumble Drying

In order to prevent fires in tumble dryers you must ensure that:

- the lint filter is cleaned each time a load is placed in the machine
- no items are left on top of the machine – including laundry or baskets

Before drying, check the garment care label to ensure the items are compatible. If they are not compatible, do not use the tumble dryer, dry according to label instructions.

Loading

Empty wet laundry into a designated clean laundry basket or trolley – this must be different to the soiled laundry equipment.

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Check the manufacturers instruction on the maximum capacity of the machine. Do not exceed this but, to ensure energy efficiency and reduced creasing, always load to the maximum capacity.

Cooling

A cool down period will avoid creasing. Some machines have an anti-crease function where the drum will continue to rotate at regular intervals for one hour after the drying cycle has stopped. Where this is not the case, remove items from the dryer once the cycle has ended to prevent garments from creasing as they cool down.

The drying process will also disinfect garments as the temperature reaches above 60°.

Ironing

Ironing softens the fabric, removes creases and dries the fabric.

Garment care labels must be checked if these items are ironed to ensure the correct temperature is used. [Appendix 2](#) has more information on ironing temperatures.

Mending

Clean laundry must be checked to ensure it is in a good state of repair, tearing or other damage can damage skin.

Check items once clean and dry for any signs of wear and tear, some garments may need to be mended. The laundry must be equipped with a mending table and sewing equipment to complete any mending tasks.

If it is not possible to mend an item straight away, a tag needs to be attached advising of the issue and what needs to be done.

Storing

Each resident must have a basket or pigeonhole on shelves in the designated clean area of the laundry, where their clean laundry is folded and placed or hung on hangers or garment racks.

Laundry is then moved to either the residents' bedrooms or the designated storage area for work wear and linen (e.g., towels). It is best to store items for 24 hours before being used, this allows it to absorb some moisture from the atmosphere and smooth out any remaining creases.

Liability of Personal Laundry

The resident agreement contains a simple statement that in the event of a garment being damaged during the laundering process it will be replaced to the equivalent, with the age of the garment being taken into consideration.

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Linen Hire

A linen hire contract is in place for laundering sheets, draw sheets and pillowcases. See the Linen hire contract for more information.

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Approval and Authorisation History

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Name	Job Title	Date
Authored by Suzi Kelly	Policy and Performance Officer	December 2023
Approved by	Quality Assurance Manager	December 2023

Change History

Version	Date	Name	Reason
Version 1	December 2023	Quality and Compliance	New guidance