

Estates & Facilities

Outlet Cleaning and Water Run Through Standard Operating Procedure (Soft FM)



Document Control

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1.0 Introduction and Purpose

This Standard Operating Procedure outlines the arrangements for Facilities Domestic Staff who run water through various outlets (as part of the cleaning regime) to minimise the risk of growth of water borne bacteria.

This procedure will also be communicated in the form of a tool box talk (see Appendix 1).

NB This procedure is also aligned to the 'Facilities Water Safety Standard Operating Procedure' which details the tasks Hard FM are required to complete in alignment with the NHS Lothian Water Safety Policy and SHTM 04-01.

2.0 Scope

This SOP will be relevant to all Facilities Domestic Services Staff.

3.0 Abbreviations/Definitions

- SOP: Standard Operating Procedure
- SHTM: Scottish Health Technical Memorandum
- PPE: Personal Protective Equipment
- SEPA: Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
- Outlets – taps (sinks and baths), shower heads
- POU- Point of Use Filters
- TVC – Total Viable Count

4.0 Safe System of Work

The required procedures to be carried out by the Domestic Services Teams are:

1. The running through of water outlets (taps and showers) will take place on a daily basis during the cleaning of the room or facility. This needs to be recorded ensuring:
 - Identification of ward, bay, room
 - Identification all outlets in the room that is being cleaned.
 - Confirmation of the water run through for the required time.
 - Initials of the Domestic completing the task
 - Recording and reporting on any situation whereby the outlet cannot be accessed (see section 8)
 2. The length of the process must be sufficient to ensure the supply of fresh hot and cold water to the outlet. The water will be run for a minimum period of 3 minutes which is the normal water run through time.
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3. There will be on occasion (such as high TVC counts or where a POU – Point of Use Filter is in use) when enhanced water run throughs of 5 minutes duration will be required; and the correct process for cleaning the POU's must be followed.
4. For mixed outlets the run through process must be (as a minimum) for 1.5 minutes at the coldest setting and 1.5 minutes at the hottest setting
5. Where there is Sensor Taps are in use a plastic sleeve will cover the tap to allow the flow of water to run for 3 minutes.
6. The outlets should be run at the maximum flow rate that does not cause any splashing beyond the sink/basin/bath.
This will minimise the creation of aerosol spray.
7. The specific detail of how this procedure will be achieved will be arranged at a local level i.e. whether the run through is timed or other tasks (cleaning of sinks and sanitary ware) equals the run through time. Reference to the 'Sink Cleaning Procedure'
8. Specific procedures with regards to cleaning of point of use filters will also require to be followed.
9. Appropriate records must be updated and retained for at least 5 years by the Domestic Services Department
10. Where Domestic Staff cannot access a room or facility for cleaning and outlet run throughs (due to clinical or operational reasons) this must be reported to the clinical teams and the Domestic Supervisor. This will be recorded on the *Completion of Tasks* weekly sheet.

There needs to be a clear adherence to procedures and recording of the:

- Reason for not gaining access such as clinical reasons as confirmed by nursing staff or operational reasons such as room or bay closure due to maintenance requirements or safety failures
 - Length of time that access is denied and the subsequent actions e.g.
 - if access cannot be gained for 1 or 2 hours does the Domestic come back?
 - if access cannot be gained for a longer period when does the Domestic (or a different Domestic)come back?
 - if access is denied for a lengthy or protracted period then is there an expectation that nursing staff take on the responsibility for the cleaning and water run throughs?
 - if a room, bay or ward is inaccessible or closed for more than 3 days then Estates will carry out water flushing procedures – which is different from 'cleaning and water run through'
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- Clear escalation of any situation where there is a lack of access and concerns around the water run through processes; this may also result in a non-conformance report being raised to ensure corrective actions are taken and documented
11. In areas which are only operational 5 days per week (Monday to Friday) the water will not be ran through on Saturdays and Sundays – which is still within the 3 day rule. During public holidays where areas may be closed for 4 days a risk based approach will be deployed in that some additional water run throughs or longer time periods of the run through may have to take place when the facility re opens.
12. Due to the Covid 19 Pandemic and other situations which may result in a room, bay, ward, department or building being affected there are steps which require to be followed:
- Closed completely - It's important that we are able to identify and notify the Estates Team; this then becomes a 'little used' outlet, this then facilitates Estates access to carryout additional
 - Closed partially – and may also require Estates input
 - Have had a material change of use e.g. become a Covid ward or area
 - Re opened as a different department or clinical area
 - Reverted back to normal use when re-opened
 - These areas may require additional or enhanced levels of cleaning, water run throughs or flushing.
- Please also refer to point 7 above.

5.0 Risk Assessment (general advice/guidance)

Where a local risk assessment is required this should take into account:

- Hazards related to slips, trips and falls
- Access to confined spaces
- Use of equipment
- Use of chemicals
- Use of ladders
- PPE required
- Any requirement to carry out more frequent flushing and/or outlet cleaning

6.0 PPE:

- Individual to each member of staff and will include the following:
 - Aprons
 - Gloves
 - Fluid Resistant Surgical Facemasks (or disposable face shield type)
 - FFP3 masks which require face fitting by the RPE Team – this will only be required
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where sampling has detected Legionella in a specific outlet; Domestic staff will be advised on the hazards associated with this and the rationale for this type of mask

7.0 Training and Information

- Local Toolbox Talks to be delivered covering the following:
 - This standard operating procedure, your site-specific local processes and any associated risk assessments
 - A practical run through of the procedure if carrying it out for the first time.
 - The reasons why this procedure is important, and the risks associated with compliance
 - Ongoing practical demonstrations e.g. if the tool box talk can be delivered at a sink
 - How the water run through process will be timed and recorded
 - Reporting and further actions required if an area cannot be accessed.
 - Slips, Trips and Falls and the importance of vigilance and good behavioural safety.
 - Use of PPE

8.0 Monitoring and Adverse Event Reporting

An important part of this process to ensure there is frequent monitoring of the areas and the tasks being carried out.

This will be carried by local management teams and for the following reasons:

- To ensure the correct water run through processes are being followed.
 - To alert Clinical and Estates & Facilities supervisory and management staff to any potential issues
 - To ensure we liaise appropriately with all key stakeholders.
 - To ensure the ongoing safety of Estates & Facilities staff, listen to any concerns and provide information, guidance, and support as and when required.
 - Any adverse events will be reported via Datix and investigated by local management teams.
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APPENDIX 1 - TOOL BOX TALK

To be delivered to **all staff** carrying out the tasks described above.

1. INTRODUCTION

Healthcare premises are dependent upon the safe management of hot and cold-water systems:

- To ensure good hygiene
- To provide a suitable environment for patients and staff
- To reduce water borne bacteria growth opportunity in the water system
- To facilitate healthcare treatments
- To provide good quality water

2. WHAT IS THE RISK?

- The risk from water borne bacteria (Including Legionella and Pseudomonas Aeruginosa) growing in parts of the water system may be minimised by regular daily use i.e. the water is being run through the system by handwashing, showering or flushing the toilet.
- When outlets are not in regular use this may allow the development of stagnant water and other favourable conditions (food supply and a calm still environment) to encourage bacteria to multiply and affect the water system.
- This in turn can lead increase the risk of illness associated with bacteria entering the water system; Estates colleagues will be alert to this occurring due to regular sampling and testing of water quality.

3. WHAT COULD HAPPEN?

- Legionella and Pseudomonas aeruginosa if allowed to grow and develop in the water systems can cause a range of illness and can be a concern for particularly susceptible people in our healthcare environments – see below *Bacteria.

4. WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO?

- This risk can be minimised by 'running through the water' reducing bacterial growth opportunities.
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- Domestic services are a vital front-line defence (although not the only defence!) in helping to minimise bacterial growth in water systems.
- This is why as part of our cleaning tasks we must run the taps and the showers for a minimum of three minutes.
- You may require to wear PPE as defined in this procedure
- It is also important you alert your supervisor or manager to any lack of access to clean and run water through you encounter in the course of your duties.

5. Other Actions

- Where water borne bacteria is identified through sampling; Estates colleagues will undertake a number of different actions including thermal and chemical disinfection and will also flush the water through the system for 7 minutes – which is different to the 3-minute run through which you do.

NOW Discuss section 4.0 Safe System of Work (above) and ensure everyone is clear on the process.

Ask for questions and ensure all attending sign the training record.

*Bacteria

- ***Pseudomonas Aeruginosa*** is a Gram-negative organism most commonly found in soil and water. It can be isolated from any moist environment. It is often termed an '**opportunistic pathogen**'. Water within systems can periodically be contaminated with these organisms. Although mains supplied water is treated and disinfected, it contains at the point of use, only residual (relatively low) levels of disinfectant chemicals (e.g. chlorine).
Note: An **opportunistic pathogen** is one which normally only causes an infection in a person with a weakened immune system.
 - **Legionnaires' Disease** is a potentially fatal form of pneumonia which can affect anybody, but which principally affects those who are susceptible because of age, life-style (smokers), illness, or immuno-suppression.
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