

Guidance for Laundering of Linens including from Isolation Rooms

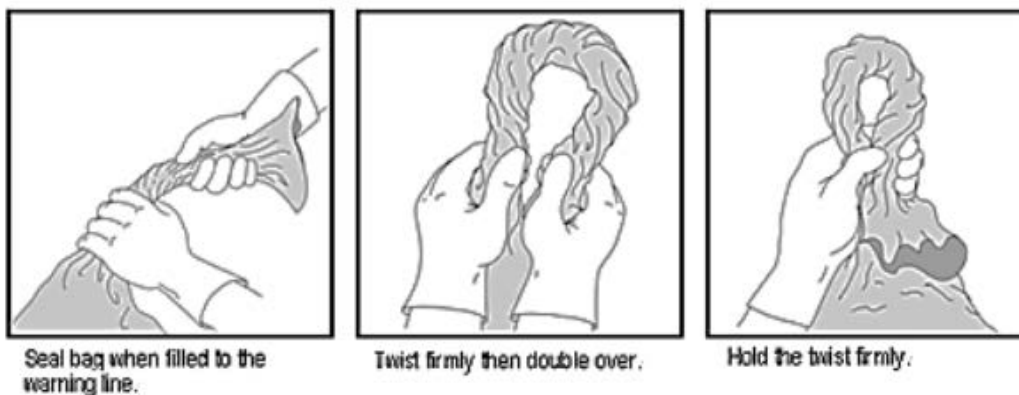
The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for laundering of linens (including bedsheets, pillowcases, and other textiles) during the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak, including those materials removed from the rooms used for housing of persons in isolation, for those who have tested positive for COVID-19 as well as those who have tested negative.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

Disposable Gown Disposable Gloves Surgical Mask Eye Protection [Safety Glasses, etc.]

General Laundry Principles and Stripping Beds:

- Avoid disruption or aerosolization of materials present on linens. **When stripping beds, do so slowly, and gather all other linens into the center of the mattress so they can be enclosed within the fitted sheet.**
- Remove pillowcases by rolling from the open end, **minimizing the contact of the outside of the pillowcase with the pillow**, and turn the pillowcase inside out upon removal.
- Place the rolled pillowcases in the **center of the mattress**, fold the flat sheet in upon itself, then end with detaching the corners of the fitted sheet and folding towards the center.
- **NOTE: Be especially careful when detaching fitted sheet corners against walls or those not easily accessible.** Do not release the elastic corner and allow it to snap in on itself (which can produce aerosols).
- Use an intact bag to bag the laundry, and **seal the bag for transport** by twisting the end until it forms a “snake”, then looping it over and affixing the loop to itself with tape or a zip tie (see below).



- If the laundry is **visibly soiled or wet (with blood, urine, etc.)**, enclose the bag inside a **leak-proof container** with a lid.
- If there are bulky linens which must be laundered (comforters, etc.), fold these up and **enclose them in a separate bag** before stripping the sheets. Do not overload bags.
- **NOTE:** If you uncover any **non-linen items** in the bed, bag these items separately and contact your supervisor for disposal guidance. If any sharp items (needles, syringes, etc.) are uncovered, **halt activities and contact your supervisor immediately.**
- After enclosing the linens, remove and dispose of your disposable gloves, **wash your hands**, and don a fresh pair of gloves to avoid transferring potential contamination to the outside of the bag or

container. If your **disposable gown has come into direct contact with the linens** (from leaning across the bed, etc.), remove it according to the PPE Removal instructions (**below**) and don a fresh one.

- **Do not sort laundry prior to washing.** Transfer the laundry directly from the bag to the washing machine with a minimum of agitation.

Laundering of Linens from Isolation Rooms (COVID-19 Negative):

Wash the linens in accordance with CDC guidelines, on a **warm, or hot water cycle** if desired [160°F (71°C) for a minimum of 25 minutes], with **chlorine bleach added to the load per the manufacturer's directions**. Chlorine bleach becomes activated at water temperatures of 135°F–145°F (57.2°C–62.7°C), and is an appropriate disinfectant for most disease-causing microbes.

Laundering of Linens from Isolation Rooms (COVID-19 Positive):

For linens removed from rooms used by persons confirmed as positive for COVID-19, the following two options are appropriate.

Option 1: If the linens are visibly contaminated with body fluids (blood, urine, etc.), **enclose them in a biohazardous waste bag**, in the same manner as you would a regular bag (instructions above), and label the bag with the University Address and phone number. Place the sealed bag into an appropriate container (leak-proof and with a lid) for removal and disposal. Ask your supervisor for instructions on obtaining biohazard bags and containers.

Option 2: Follow standard instructions for removal and bagging (above). Wash the linens in accordance with CDC guidelines, on a **warm, or hot water cycle** if desired [160°F (71°C) for a minimum of 25 minutes], with **chlorine bleach added to the load per the manufacturer's directions**. Chlorine bleach becomes activated at water temperatures of 135°F–145°F (57.2°C–62.7°C), and is an appropriate disinfectant for viral microorganisms such as those which cause COVID-19.

PPE Removal: Using a gloved hand, grasp the palm area of the other gloved hand and peel off first glove. Hold removed glove in gloved hand. Slide fingers of ungloved hand under remaining glove at wrist and peel off second glove over first glove. Discard in designated waste container. Unfasten gown ties, taking care sleeves don't contact your body when reaching for ties. Pull gown away from neck and shoulders, touching inside of gown only. Turn gown inside out. Discard in designated waste container. Grasp ties or elastics of the mask, and remove without touching the front. Discard in a waste container. Remove safety glasses, wipe with disinfectant. **Wash hands and wrists with soap and water for 20 seconds.** Don fresh PPE before entering a new isolation area.

NOTE: CDC guidelines for laundering of contaminated linens in hospitals emphasize “standard precautions” to protect workers from potential disease transmission from contaminated laundry. Linens exposed to a person who tests positive for COVID-19 do not present an extraordinary (greater than normal) risk of disease transmission, and **these guidelines are based upon principles of good hygiene and common sense**. If you are concerned regarding your ability to carry out your job tasks, please contact your supervisor.