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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Bae Abertawe
Swansea Bay University
Health Board



Meeting Date	Decontamination Sub Group October 2019.		Agenda Item	
Report Title	Personal Protective Equipment for Decontamination SBAR			
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Presented by	Gareth Howells Director of Nursing & Patient Experience			
Freedom of Information	Open			
Purpose of the Report	This report provides the Decontamination Sub Group with the proposed Health Board standard for personal protective equipment requirements for decontamination areas across Swansea Bay University Health Board.			
Key Issues	The Health Board is responsible for ensuring staff have access to appropriate personal protective equipment to reduce the risks associated with that task.			
Specific Action Required <i>(please ✓ one only)</i>	Information	Discussion	Assurance	Approval
				✓
Recommendations	<p>The Health Board is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider and approve the proposed Health Board standard for personal protective equipment requirements for decontamination. 			

Proposed Health Board standard for personal protective equipment for decontamination of endoscopes

1. INTRODUCTION

Swansea Bay University Health board has a responsibility to ensure that the safety and welfare of patients, relatives and healthcare workers is actively promoted and protected. Assurance that risks are identified, monitored and where possible, reduced or prevented is required. To meet Health and Care Standards (2015), Standard 2.1 and 2.4, the Health Board must ensure risk management and Health and Safety are embedded within all healthcare settings and are monitored to ensure continuous improvement. Also, the Health Board must ensure that staff are protected from exposure to infections that can be acquired and transmitted at work.

The use of personal protective equipment (PPE) has been proven to reduce the risks of transmission of microorganisms between patients, healthcare workers, the environment and equipment. Employers have duties concerning the provision and use of personal protective equipment at work and although there is no direct legislative requirement to wear an apron/ gown for the purposes of the prevention and control of infection, the legal duties as set out in Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) legislate that employers (i.e. Swansea Bay Health Board) must provide PPE which affords adequate protection against the risks associated with the task being undertaken. Employees (i.e. health and social care workers) have a responsibility to comply by ensuring that suitable PPE is worn correctly for the task being carried out.

2. BACKGROUND

Welsh Government (WG) commission biannual All Wales endoscopy decontamination surveys. These surveys/audits provide a measure of reassurance that all the processes involved in decontamination of flexible endoscopes and non-lumen probes comply with regulatory requirements and accord with guidance developed to help ensure patient safety. The audits took place across Wales during the third quarter 2018/19.

As part of these audits, the criteria set out in the Health and Care Standards (2015) are also monitored. During the recent audits, it was highlighted that there were variable, and in some areas, unacceptable practices relating to PPE usage throughout the Health Board. The report has recommended the Health Board ensure there is a standard use of PPE in all departments across the organisation to reduce variations in practice and standardise processes.

3. ASSESSMENT

It is recommended that, during procedures when contact of clothing/ exposed skin with blood/body fluids, secretions or excretions is anticipated, long-sleeve gowns and gloves should be worn. If the activity is likely to generate splashes or sprays of blood/body fluids, secretions or excretions, visors should also be worn.

Consideration has been given to the concerns from staff involved in the decontamination process regarding the heat in the decontamination areas and the request to continue with the current PPE (gloves, armlets, aprons and visor). The following has been undertaken to ensure an informed and balanced decision has been made:

- An All Wales benchmarking exercise has been carried out to ascertain the level of PPE worn by healthcare workers in decontamination throughout Wales. It has been found that the majority of endoscopy units, HSDUs and silo decontamination areas use long-sleeve gowns, gloves, and visors for the manual decontamination of endoscopes.
- The advice from the Assistant Director of Health and Safety has been sought to consider concerns regarding the temperatures in the decontamination areas.
- A thorough review of the PPE guidance has been undertaken.

Following this above, it has been assessed that during the manual cleaning of endoscopes of all types, there is a risk of contamination of clothing/exposed skin and a risk of splash. Therefore, the PPE required is long-sleeve waterproof gowns, visors and gloves. The correct procedure for applying and removing this PPE can be found in [appendix 6](#) of the National Infection Prevention and Control Manual.

Due to concerns with the temperatures in some of the decontamination areas, it is proposed that staff may wear theatre scrubs during the decontamination process. This will ensure a thinner uniform is worn underneath the required PPE, so that staff may feel cooler. It will also ensure that uniform that has been worn in the decontamination areas is hospital laundered to further reduce the risks of cross-contamination. It is also recommended that regular hydration breaks are factored in to the working day. Drinks bottles must NOT be taken in to the procedure rooms or decontamination areas. This is to reduce the risks of staff ingesting microorganisms and/or chemical residue.

4. RECOMMENDATION

To ensure the Health Board is upholding its legal duties to protect the safety and wellbeing of its staff, it is recommended that this proposed level and standardisation of PPE, becomes the approved standard across the Health Board. This standard is to be implemented in all decontamination areas, at all times, where endoscope decontamination is carried out.

Any derogation to this standard would require a local risk assessment.