

Summary of August 2011 Infection Control Changes

Changes to the minimum standards for infection control went into effect on August 20, 2011 and will have an immediate impact on most dental practices. This is a summary of the major changes. A copy of the complete standard is available on the Dugoni School of Dentistry [web site](#) and is **required to be posted in the workplace**.

- The standard now applies to all classifications of dental health care personnel (DHCP), including all paid and non-paid personnel who may have exposure to contaminated equipment or patient body fluids. This includes dentists, dental hygienists, dental assistants, dental laboratory technicians, students and trainees, contractual personnel and other persons not directly involved in patient care but potentially exposed to infectious agents. Previously only licensees were subject to the regulatory requirements.
- Chemical resistant utility gloves and task specific personal protective equipment (PPE) must be worn when handling hazardous chemicals, including germicides.
- Hands must be washed with soap and water at the beginning of the day. Thereafter, alcohol hand rubs can be used unless hands are visibly soiled.
- Refrain from providing direct patient care if hand conditions are present that may render the provider or patients more susceptible to opportunistic infection or exposure. (note: they do not provide examples of which conditions this might include).
- Exam gloves must be worn during all preclinical, clinical, post-clinical and laboratory procedures. (note: no differentiation is made between contaminated and non-contaminated materials).
- Specify that cleaning of instruments must precede sterilization.
- Heat-sensitive critical instruments that are disinfected using an immersion disinfectant (e.g.; glutaraldehyde) must be packaged upon completion of processing and remain packaged until use.
- All sterilized items must be marked with the date of sterilization and the identification of the sterilizer (if more than one is used) on the external packaging. Note: Regular ink or markers will “bleed” through packaging and compromise the sterility of the contents. A Sharpie[®] Industrial Marker, item #13601 is one of the only pens that is appropriate for this activity. Sterilization pouches should be marked on the plastic side of the pouch.
- All parts of all handpieces (including slow speed motors) must be heat sterilized.
- Specifies cleaning prior to disinfection of equipment and surfaces.

The continuing education requirements remain unchanged.

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