

**WAC 246-817-655 Sterilization and disinfection, environmental infection prevention and control.** A practitioner shall:

(1) Follow the CDC *Guidelines for Infection Control in Dental Health-Care Settings* 2003, MMWR Vol. 52, No. RR-17, Appendix C for Methods for Sterilizing and Disinfecting Patient-Care Items and Environmental Surfaces, including:

(a) Clean and reprocess through disinfection or sterilization reusable critical, semicritical, and noncritical dental equipment and devices according to manufacturer instructions before use on another patient.

(i) Effective August 31, 2022, sterilization of low-speed hand piece motors after use on a patient is required.

(ii) Sterilization is not required for those sections of a battery operated hand piece system that cannot be sterilized according to manufacturer's instructions. However, battery operated hand piece systems that have specific engineering controls to isolate the sections that cannot be sterilized, render those sections "noncritical," must be used if commercially available; those sections that cannot be sterilized must be processed according to manufacturer's instructions between patient uses.

(b) Clean and reprocess through disinfection or sterilization reusable critical, semicritical, and noncritical dental equipment and devices according to manufacturer instructions.

(c) Clean and reprocess reusable dental equipment according to the manufacturer instructions.

(d) All disposable and single-use items, as labeled by the United State Food and Drug Administration, must be discarded after use on a single patient.

(i) Single-use items that need to be tested for size are not considered used unless cemented in the mouth. Single-use items can be cleaned or reprocessed (disinfected or sterilized) when following manufacturer's instructions.

(ii) If a single-use item is not used, but is contaminated or exposed to aerosols during the appointment by being placed on a surface ready to use, it may only be sterilized if the process of doing so does not compromise the efficacy of the item including, but not limited to, anesthetic carpules.

(2) Bag or wrap contaminated instruments in packages, containers, or cassettes in preparation for sterilization.

(a) Store sterile instruments and supplies in a covered or closed area.

(b) Wrapped packages, containers, or cassettes of sterilized instruments must be inspected before opening and use to ensure the packaging material has not been compromised.

(c) Wrapped packages, containers, or cassettes of sterilized instruments must be opened as close to the time of the procedure as possible. Opening in the presence of the patient is preferred.

(d) Instruments sterilized for immediate use do not mandate the use of a bag or a wrap. If the instrument is not used immediately, it must be bagged or wrapped.

(3) Use all mechanical, chemical, and biological monitors according to manufacturer instructions to ensure the effectiveness of the sterilization process.

(4) Test sterilizers by biological spore test method as recommended by the manufacturer on at least a weekly basis when scheduled patients are treated.

(a) In the event of a positive biological spore test, the licensed dentist shall take immediate remedial action as recommended by the manufacturer.

(b) A licensed dentist shall record biological spore tests and results either in the form of a log reflecting dates and person or persons conducting the testing or copies of reports from an independent testing entity. A licensed dentist shall maintain this documentation for a period of five years.

(5) Thoroughly rinse items such as impressions contaminated with blood or saliva. Place and transport items such as impressions to a dental laboratory off-site in a case containment device that is sealed and labeled.

(6) Disinfect all work surfaces after each patient.

(7) Disinfect using an intermediate-level disinfectant having, but not limited to, a tuberculocidal claim, when a surface is visibly contaminated with blood.

(8) Use only United States Environmental Protection Agency registered disinfectants or detergents/disinfectants with label claims for use in health care setting, following the manufacturer's instructions.

(9) Use high volume evacuation (HVE) whenever possible in all clinical situations expected to produce aerosol or spatter, such as, but not limited to, ultrasonics, high-speed hand pieces and air polishing devices. HVE equipment must be installed and maintained to manufacturer's specifications to ensure proper evacuation at the treatment site. HVE devices must be used as intended for HVE. A saliva ejector does not qualify as an HVE device.

(10) The following definitions apply to WAC 246-817-655.

(a) "Critical," "semicritical," and "noncritical" means categories given to patient care items including, but not limited to, dental instruments, devices, and equipment depending on the potential risk of infection associated with intended use.

(i) "Critical items" means those items used to penetrate soft tissue, contact bone, enter into or contact the bloodstream or other normally sterile tissue. Critical items must be sterilized by heat.

(ii) "Noncritical items" means those items used to contact intact skin. Noncritical items must be disinfected with United States Environmental Protection Agency registered hospital disinfectant or detergent.

(iii) "Semicritical items" means those items used to contact mucous membranes or nonintact skin. Semicritical items must be sterilized by heat if heat-tolerant, or by high-level disinfection if a semicritical item is heat-sensitive.

(b) "Disinfect" or "disinfection" means use of a chemical agent on inanimate objects, such as floors, walls, or sinks, to destroy virtually all recognized pathogenic microorganisms, but not necessarily all microbial forms such as bacterial endospores.

(c) "High-level disinfection" means disinfection that inactivates vegetative bacteria, mycobacteria, fungi, and viruses but not necessarily high numbers of bacterial spores.

(d) "High volume evacuation" or "HVE" means the equipment used to remove debris, aerosols, and liquids.

(e) "Remedial action" means manufacturer recommended action necessary to obtain a negative spore test result.

(f) "Sterilize" or "sterilization" means the use of heat, chemical, or other nonchemical procedure to destroy all microorganisms.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 18.32.002 and 18.32.0365. WSR 21-01-214, § 246-817-655, filed 12/23/20, effective 1/23/21.]