

LAUNDRY HEALTH & SAFETY ASSESSMENT TOOL – 8-03

- Laundry Hazard Specific Outline List
 - Repetitive Motion/Ergonomic Consideration List
 - General Laundry Check List
 - Sharps Container Safety Feature Evaluation Form
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➤ LAUNDRY HAZARD SPECIFIC OUTLINE LIST

Prevent Heat Stress:

- Equip the laundry with *air conditioning* to avoid heat stress during the summer.
- If air conditioning is not possible or is not adequate to prevent heat stress, *schedule work and rest periods* to eliminate the problem.
- Provide *water* fountains.
- Learn to *recognize the signs and symptoms of heat stress* to ensure that anyone who is affected receives prompt treatment.

Provide Adequate Lighting:

- Make sure the lighting for detailed visual work (i.e. mending) is adequate. Use “task lighting” i.e. table or floor lamp, to increase the amount of light.
- Position work and the task lighting to eliminate glare or any light shining into eyes.

Reduce the Risk of Lifting Injuries:

- Eliminate or reduce the need to lift, lower, carry or otherwise handle heavy bags of laundry by:
 - ✓ Using mechanical aids such as carts and slings
 - ✓ Minimizing the distance, the load is carried
 - ✓ Keeping loads at hip height
 - ✓ Arranging work tasks and physical layout to minimize the number of times the load is lifted or carried
 - ✓ Using spring-loaded inserts for laundry carts to keep the laundry at hip height
- Use machines that tilt to empty loads from the washer & dryer. If your machines do not have this feature, use inexpensive reaching aids, e.g. a homemade “clothes rake.”
- Ensure that large bags of laundry are not more than two third full. Use smaller bags to ensure that they will not be too heavy.
- Test the weight of the laundry bag before attempting to lift it.

Reduce Other Ergonomic Demands:

- Change working postures and tasks frequently throughout the workday. For example:
 - ✓ Rotate among tasks that use different muscle groups (after sorting or folding for a while, do something that requires less arm and hand work)
 - ✓ Alternate between tasks that are done while sitting and standing
 - ✓ Increase the variety of tasks in the job.
- Avoid working to one side. If you must face one side, alternate positions to use the muscles on both sides. It is least stressful to work when upright and activities are directly in the front of the body.
- Make sure staff can safely handle the carts used to deliver clean clothes. If a cart is too big to see around or too heavy for one person, ensure two people are available, one to push and the other to pull and guide.
- Use an ergonomically designed chair for seated workstations (e.g., for sewing, mending and marking). An ergonomic chair should support the back and have adjustable features to fit people of different sizes. Ergonomic chairs vary greatly in cost and features. Try out different chairs for different workstations and people before purchasing.
- Avoid frequent forward bending in doing work:
 - ✓ Have working levels at or just below elbow height (working level refers to the height of the work surface plus the height of the work)
 - ✓ Have work surfaces that are adjustable in height.
- On laundry bags, use lock sliders that are release by pressure from the whole hand, not by pinching with thumb and forefinger.
- If the height of your work surface cannot be adjusted, set the level for a tall person and use a safe platform to raise shorter workers.
- When wearing gloves, choose a pair that fits well. Hands become tired faster when gloves are too large.

Coping When Standing a Lot:

- Use a sit-stand stool at standing workstations (e.g., the folding table) to take some weight off the feet.
- Raise one leg and place one foot on a footstool or foot rail while standing.
- Place anti-fatigue matting at workstations where people have to stand for long periods of time.
- Wear anti-fatigue shoe insoles if standing or walking a lot.

➤ REPETITIVE MOTION/ERGONOMIC CONSIDERATION LIST

Repetitive Motion/Awkward Posture Considerations:

- ❑ Eye Strain
 - ✓ Adequate Lighting
 - ✓ Appropriate Distances
 - ✓ Ease of Markers/Signs/Print/Type/Colors
- ❑ Neck & Shoulder Bending
 - ✓ Frequency & Severity of bending (degrees)
 - ✓ Loads associated with movements
- ❑ Truck Twisting & Bending
 - ✓ Frequency & Severity
 - ✓ Loads associated with tasks
- ❑ Arm & Elbow Motion
 - ✓ Frequency & Severity of rotating actions
 - ✓ Awkward postures
- ❑ Wrist Bend
 - ✓ Frequency & Severity of non-neutral movements
- ❑ Finger/Hand Motion
 - ✓ Pinching vs. whole hand pressure
 - ✓ Frequency & Severity of non-neutral movements
- ❑ Leg, Knee & Ankle
 - ✓ Frequency & Severity of non-neutral movements
 - ✓ Awkward Postures
 - ✓ Associated loads with movements & tasks
- ❑ Static Posture
 - ✓ Duration & frequency of intermittent movements

Lifting Tasks Considerations:

- ❑ Weight of load - (pounds)
- ❑ Starting Load Positions - (inches from body center)
- ❑ Starting Load Height - (inches above or below waist)
- ❑ Lift/Lower Distance - (inches from start of the lift to end)
- ❑ Frequency - (lifts/minute)
- ❑ Body Twisting angle - (degrees, severity)
- ❑ Quality of Grip – (firm vs. poor)
- ❑ Distance Carried - (feet)

➤ **GENERAL LAUNDRY CHECKLIST:**

Yes No

- ___ ___ 1. Is soiled linen collected in such a way so as to avoid microbial dissemination into the environment?
- ___ ___ 2. Are separate containers used for transporting clean and soiled linens?
- ___ ___ 3. Is maintenance work on machines done only while machines are "off"?
- ___ ___ 4. Are line switches locked and tagged during repairs?
- ___ ___ 5. Are hot lines (either steam or hot water) insulated if they are lower than 7 feet from the floor or above the height and maintenance men can come in contact with them?
- ___ ___ 6. Are hot surfaces insulated?
- ___ ___ 7. Is sorting of linen done at the source?
- ___ ___ 8. Do employees avoid touching machines or parts of the machines that may be hot?
- ___ ___ 9. Do employees keep hands away from face when handling soiled linen?
- ___ ___ 10. Do employees strictly wash hands before eating?
- ___ ___ 11. Are scoops and containers used to handle bleaches, soaps and acids? Or better yet, are direct feed lines used instead of manual handling?
- ___ ___ 12. Is head covering worn by employees?
- ___ ___ 13. Is clothing that cannot catch in moving machinery, and strong shoes with good soles and heels worn consistently?
- ___ ___ 14. Is the lint cleaned daily from drying tumblers?
- ___ ___ 15. Is special care given to soiled laundry that have contained paint, grease, cod liver oil, etc. or are constructed with foam plastic or rubber interiors?
- ___ ___ 16. Are employees aware that wool blankets may ignite?
- ___ ___ 17. Is cooling air turned on before removing clothing from the dryer to prevent burns and keep clothing from igniting after it has been folded?
- ___ ___ 18. Is lint and other debris not permitted to accumulate on overhead ductwork, pipes and wiring?
- ___ ___ 19. Are proper gloves worn in handling linen to prevent needle sticks, and in handling cleaning chemicals (detergents, soaps, bleaches, solvents, wastes, etc.) to prevent chemical exposures?

Notes: _____

- ___ ___ 20. Is adequate ventilation available in the laundry area, especially in summertime?
- ___ ___ 21. Is laundry processing operations and work areas designed to minimize awkward posturing, over-reaching, bending, etc. but enable good body mechanics?
- ___ ___ 22. Are work areas evaluated and modified for noise

➤ SHARPS CONTAINERS SAFETY FEATURE EVALUATION FORM

Date: _____ Dept: _____ Occupation: _____

Product: _____ Number of times Used: _____

1 Agree 5 Disagree, N/A

- 1) The container is puncture resistant. **1 2 3 4 5 N/A**
- 2) The container is stable **1 2 3 4 5 N/A**
- 3) The container allows single handed use. **1 2 3 4 5 N/A**
- 4) The user can access the container from any direction **1 2 3 4 5 N/A**
- 5) It is possible to drop sharps into the container vertically. **1 2 3 4 5 N/A**
- 6) Minimal or no force is required to put sharps into the container. **1 2 3 4 5 N/A**
- 7) The container opens and closes easily. **1 2 3 4 5 N/A**
- 8) Container closure maintains integrity after repeated use **1 2 3 4 5 N/A**
- 9) The container can accept all sizes and shapes of sharps. **1 2 3 4 5 N/A**
- 10) The size of the container is appropriate to its use **1 2 3 4 5 N/A**
- 11) No one can access the contents of the container to retrieve a sharp. **1 2 3 4 5 N/A**
- 12) There is a temporary lock for transport that is secure but reversible **1 2 3 4 5 N/A**
- 13) There is a permanent lock for final disposal which is not reversible **1 2 3 4 5 N/A**
- 14) There is an absorbent lining to collect excess fluid **1 2 3 4 5 N/A**
- 15) The user can determine the fill level visually **1 2 3 4 5 N/A**
- 16) There is a signal when the box is 2/3 full **1 2 3 4 5 N/A**
- 17) The container is appropriately labeled **1 2 3 4 5 N/A**
- 18) Biohazard of containers contents is apparent **1 2 3 4 5 N/A**
- 19) When the container is dropped or turned upside down (even before it is permanently closed), sharps stay inside. **1 2 3 4 5 N/A**
- 20) Users can determine easily, from various viewing angles, when the container is full. **1 2 3 4 5 N/A.**
- 21) It is safe to close the container. (Sharps should not protrude into the path of hands attempting to close the container.) **1 2 3 4 5 N/A**
- 22) The container closes securely. **1 2 3 4 5 N/A**
- 23) The product has handles that allow for safe transport of full containers. . . **1 2 3 4 5 N/A**
- 24) The product does not require extensive training to operate correctly. **1 2 3 4 5 N/A**