

Infection control policy and procedure

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure that HomeMade minimises the risk of the spread of infectious diseases in its work environments and our customers' home environments while adhering to a person-centred approach.

This policy and procedure applies to all staff, including contractors.

Applicable Aged Care Quality Standards

- *Standard 1. Consumer Dignity and Choice*
- *Standard 3. Personal Care and Clinical Care*
- *Standard 7. Human Resources*
- *Standard 8. Organisational Governance*

Definitions

Infectious diseases – Also known as communicable diseases; caused by organisms such as bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites. These microorganisms can invade and reproduce in the human body, causing harmful effects. In healthcare settings, the main modes for transmission of infectious agents are contact (including blood borne), droplet and airborne.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – Clothing or equipment worn by workers to protect them from possible harm or injury. PPE can include items such as eye and face protection (e.g. glasses, goggles or face shields), gloves, masks, clothing (e.g. coveralls, aprons), and safety footwear.

Standard Precautions – Work practices required to achieve a basic level of infection prevention and control. Standard precautions are the minimum infection prevention and control practices that must be used at all times in all situations.

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Transmission-based precautions – Are used when standard precautions alone are not sufficient to prevent the spread of an infectious agent. Transmission-based precautions are based upon the mode of transmission of the infectious agent.¹

Clinical waste – also known as medical waste, can potentially cause sharp injury, infection, or disease. Examples of clinical waste are human tissue, blood and bodily fluids. Clinical waste excludes incontinence and sanitary aids. Waste generated in the treatment of minor injuries (e.g. bandages, band-aids, cotton wool) is not clinical waste.

Cytotoxic waste – is waste contaminated or may be contaminated with a cytotoxic drug. Cytotoxic drugs are chemotherapy medications and contain compounds that have carcinogenic, mutagenic and teratogenic potential which can cause foetal and neonatal abnormalities. Direct contact with cytotoxic waste may also irritate the skin, eyes and mucous membranes, and ulceration and necrosis of tissue.

General waste – is waste that does not have the potential to cause sharp injury, infection, or hazard. General waste includes incontinence pads, sanitary waste, disposable nappies, gloves (not blood-stained), tissues, and bandages.

Medication waste – is waste containing medications, drugs or other chemical substances. Medication waste includes expired or discarded medicines, filters or other materials contaminated by Medication products.

Sharps – any object capable of inflicting a penetrating injury. Sharps include but are not limited to hypodermic needles, intravenous sets ('spikes'), and broken glass.

Policy Statement

HomeMade has a duty of care and must take all reasonable steps to safeguard customers, other staff, and stakeholders from infection.

¹ Infection Control Guidelines. [2018]. *Infection Control – standard and transmission-based precautions*. [Internet]. Victoria State Government, Health VIC. Available from: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/infection-control-guidelines/standard-additional-precautions> [accessed 17 July 2019]

Procedures

Any staff member or contractor with any infectious disease, including the flu (influenza or similar), is required to stay away from the workplace until such time they are cleared by a doctor.

Notifiable diseases are diseases that must be reported to the Health Department by health practitioners. Any staff member or contractor that has a notifiable disease must not attend work until such time as they are cleared by their doctor.

A list of notifiable diseases can be found at:

<http://www.health.gov.au/casedefinitions>.

To further prevent the spread of infection, HomeMade encourages staff, service providers, and contractors to receive an annual influenza vaccination. We promote the benefits of an annual vaccination for the health and well-being of our community and customers.

Standard Precautions

Contractors engaged by HomeMade customers must use Standard precautions when cleaning surfaces. contractors must wear suitable gloves and other protective clothing appropriate for the task. Protective eyewear must be worn where splashing is likely to occur.

Although environmental surfaces play a minor role in the transmission of infections, a regular cleaning and maintenance schedule is necessary to maintain a safe environment. Surfaces should be cleaned on a regular basis using only cleaning procedures that minimise dispersal of microorganisms into the air.

Toilets, sinks, washbasins, baths, shower areas, and surrounding areas should be cleaned regularly or as required. Cleaning methods for these items should avoid generation of aerosols.

Floors should be cleaned daily or as necessary with a vacuum cleaner. Alternatively, damp dusting or cleaning with a dust-retaining mop is acceptable.

Routine surface cleaning should be undertaken as follows:

- clean and dry work surfaces before and after usage or when visibly soiled;
- spills should be dealt with immediately;
- use detergent and warm water for routine cleaning;

- where surface disinfection is required, use in accordance with manufacturer's instructions;
- clean and dry surfaces before and after applying disinfectants;
- empty buckets after use, wash with detergent and warm water and store dry; and
- mops should be cleaned in detergent and warm water then stored dry.

Standard precautions to protect against infectious diseases include:

- wash hands for 30 seconds before and after contact with customers, eating, using gloves and after using the toilet, contact with used equipment and contact with body substances or equipment, materials (including linen) or contaminated surfaces;
- wear disposable latex gloves when handling food or any item which may be contaminated by bodily fluids;
- cover cuts or scratches with waterproof, breathable dressing;
- wear personal protective equipment (PPE) such as protective eyewear, an apron, enclosed footwear and/or a face mask if splashing or direct contact with body fluids is likely;
- use sharps containers at point of use. Do not re-sheath sharps; and
- clean up spills with water and bleach.

Anyone with signs and symptoms of a respiratory infection, regardless of the cause, should follow or be instructed to follow respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette as follows:

- Cover the nose/mouth with disposable single-use tissues when coughing, sneezing, wiping and blowing noses;
- Use tissues to contain respiratory secretions;
- Dispose of tissues in the nearest waste receptacle or bin after use;
- If no tissues are available, cough or sneeze into the inner elbow rather than the hand;
- Practice hand hygiene after contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects/materials; and
- Keep contaminated hands away from the mucous membranes of the eyes and nose.

During a global pandemic:

Anyone with signs and symptoms of an infection that meet the declared pandemic symptoms should follow the public health message most relevant for that date.

Transmission-based Precautions

Transmission-based precautions (TBPs) are used in addition to standard precautions when standard precautions alone may be insufficient to prevent transmission of infection.

HomeMade customers are encouraged to inform their contractors when they are unwell or have symptoms of infectious diseases. It is the responsibility of the contractors to assess the customer's health status and determine if transmission-based precautions are necessary.

- Where it is known or suspected by HomeMade that a customer is infected or colonised with highly transmissible pathogens that can transmit or cause infections, contractors must use transmission-based precautions.
- Transmission-based precautions are not required for customers with blood-borne viruses, such as HIV, hepatitis B virus, or hepatitis C virus.
- The type of transmission-based precaution used depends on the mode of transmission of the pathogen. For example: Pulmonary Tuberculosis, Chickenpox, and Measles are all airborne transmitted;
- Influenza (Flu), Pertussis (Whooping Cough), and Rubella are all droplet transmitted; and
- Viral Gastroenteritis (Gastro), Clostridium Difficile (CDI), Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) (a strain of Staph), and Scabies are all contact transmitted (direct or indirect).
- Contractors should exercise caution and implement the appropriate transmission-based precautions based on the specific infectious disease and its mode of transmission when providing care to customers who are unwell or have symptoms of infectious diseases.

Table 1 outlines the transmission-based precautions to be taken when supporting customers with airborne, droplet or contact transmission type infections (known or suspected).²

Infection Control Measure	Route of Transmission		
	Airborne	Droplet	Contact
Gloves	As per Standard Precautions	As per Standard Precautions	YES <i>For all manual contact with customer, equipment and immediate environmental surfaces</i>
Disposable (waterproof) apron/gown	As per Standard Precautions	As per Standard Precautions	YES <i>When direct care worker's clothing is in substantial contact with the customer, items in contact with the customer, and their immediate environment (for example showering and laundry services)</i>
P2 Respirator Mask (specific disposable with filter)	YES	Not Required	Not Required
Mask (disposable surgical style)	No (P2 Respirator instead)	YES	As per Standard Precautions
Goggles/face shields	As per Standard Precautions	As per Standard Precautions	As per Standard Precautions

² Infection Control Guidelines. [2018]. *Infection Control – standard and transmission-based precautions*. [Internet]. Victoria State Government, Health VIC. Available from: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/infection-control-guidelines/standard-additional-precautions> [accessed 17 July 2019]

Waste Management

HomeMade recognises proper waste management is essential to maintain a safe and hygienic environment. HomeMade provides the following waste management guidelines:

General Waste

- General waste should be handled in a manner consistent with domestic waste practices.

Clinical Waste

- Clinical waste, which includes items contaminated with blood, body fluids, microbiological materials, or cytotoxic substances, should only be handled and disposed of by clinically trained personnel (clinicians).
- Waste generated in the treatment of minor injuries (e.g. bandages, band-aids, cotton wool) is not clinical waste.
- Contracted clinicians who are responsible for managing cytotoxic waste must wear purple nitrile gloves where available to ensure safe handling.
- All clinical waste must be securely placed in clearly labelled, heavy-duty yellow plastic bags to prevent contamination and leakage.
- Contracted clinicians responsible for dealing with clinical waste must have a clear plan for its disposal, ensuring it is sent to a licensed medical centre or hospital for safe and proper disposal.

Sharps

- All sharps, such as needles and syringes, pose a potential hazard and can cause injury through cuts or puncture wounds. Discarded sharps that have come into contact with blood, body fluids, microbiological materials, or cytotoxic substances are considered contaminated and potentially infectious. There is a risk of disease transmission if the sharp was used in the treatment of a customer with an infectious disease.

- Contracted clinicians or the person using the sharp are responsible for its safe disposal. Sharps should be disposed of immediately following their use.
- If carrying a sharp is unavoidable, it must be securely held in a container, such as a kidney dish, to minimise the likelihood of a sharps injury.
- Sharps are to be disposed of in designated puncture-resistant containers that conform to relevant Australian standards (AS/NZS 4261:1994 reusable; AS 4031:1992 non-reusable).
- Sharps containers must be disposed of when they have reached $\frac{3}{4}$ capacity or have reached the specified fill line. Seal the container appropriately and transport it to the nearest pharmacy for safe disposal.

Laundry

- To minimise the risk of disease transmission via exposure from contaminated clothing and linen, contractors should handle laundry in a way that prevents exposure to skin and mucous membranes, for example, by wearing gloves.
- If laundry needs to be transported outside of the customer's home (e.g., to a laundromat or serviced apartments), it should be bagged as soon as possible to contain any potential contaminants.
- Laundry that is heavily contaminated with blood or other body substances should be transported in a dedicated laundry basket or provided bag to prevent leakage and ensure proper containment during transportation.

By following these waste management principles, HomeMade ensures the safety and well-being of both customers and service providers while maintaining a clean and hygienic environment.

Person-centred Approach to Infection Control

A person-centred approach to providing support includes putting customers at the centre of infection prevention and control and enabling them to participate in their care/support process. It also includes respecting customer's right to dignity and control when determining the most appropriate standard and transmission-based precautions used during infection control planning.

To support a two-way approach to infection prevention and control and encourage customer participation, HomeMade will:

- provide opportunities for customers to contribute their perspective when

- developing policies and programs;
- familiarise customers with its infection prevention and control strategies;
- encourage customers to disclose their health or risk status if there is a potential risk or source of infection;
- provide opportunities for customers to identify and communicate risks and encourage them to use feedback procedures through the service's feedback and complaints processes; and
- inform customers about the protocols for protecting their privacy and confidentiality.

Reporting

Incidents relating to infection control or infectious diseases must be reported as soon as practicable in accordance with HomeMade's *Incident Management policies and procedures*.

Supporting Documents

Documents relevant to this policy and procedure include:

- *Workplace Incident Management Policy and Procedure*
- *HomeMade Incident Management Policy and Process*

Monitoring and Review

This policy and procedure will be reviewed at least annually by the Senior Leadership Team. Reviews will incorporate staff, customer and other stakeholder feedback.

HomeMade's *Continuous Improvement Register* will be used to record identified improvements and monitor the progress of their implementation. Where relevant, this information will be considered as part of HomeMade's service planning and delivery processes.

Document Control

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