Management of used/soiled linen for people with confirmed or suspected coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

**Standard, contact and droplet precautions** apply to the handling of all used linen from people with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. These infection prevention and control precautions are used to minimise the risk of infection transmission. Further information about standard, contact and droplet precautions can be found here:


**Used linen from people with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 in a hospital or residential care facility should be managed as follows:**

- A linen skip is to be lined with a soluble plastic bag and kept inside the person’s room.
- Used /soiled linen is to be deposited directly into the linen skip in the person’s room.
- Avoid agitating the linen which can cause aerosolisation of any infectious particles.
- Avoid contact with soiled linen by holding items away from the body prior to depositing in the linen skip.
- The linen skip must be replaced when ¾ full.
- Tie the soluble plastic bag then tie the linen bag to prevent it opening during soiled linen transport or storage.
- Wear gloves when transporting soiled bagged linen to the dirty linen trolley.
- Perform hand hygiene after removal of gloves after contact with soiled linen and laundry.
- There is no need to wear surgical or P2/N95 masks or protective eyewear when handling bagged laundry.
- Staff at the laundry service will place the soluble plastic linen bag into the washer to avoid handling the soiled linen.

All used/soiled linen that is laundered by a laundry service provider should be managed in accordance with Australian Standard AS/NZS 4146:2000.
Soiled linen from people with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 in the community care setting should be managed as follows:

- Used/soiled linen, blankets or clothing should be placed either:
  - into a plastic bag which is then emptied directly into the washing machine and the bag discarded into general waste
  - into a plastic laundry basket that is emptied directly into the washing machine and then cleaned and disinfected prior to reuse.
- Avoid contact with used/soiled linen by holding items away from the body prior to depositing in the plastic bag or laundry basket
- Used/soiled linen, blankets or clothing should be washed as usual in laundry detergent for the maximum washing cycle at the hottest applicable temperature.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) refers to equipment used alone or in combination when handling the used/soiled linen of people who have suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

### PPE requirements for staff handling used/soiled linen from a person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hand hygiene</th>
<th>Surgical mask</th>
<th>N95/P2 mask</th>
<th>Eye protection</th>
<th>Gloves</th>
<th>Fluid resistant gown or plastic apron</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Handling used/soiled linen from a person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Refer to this link for correct sequence for donning (putting on) and doffing (taking off) PPE.


### References

Coronavirus Disease-19 (COVID-19) CDNA National Guidelines for Public Health Units

Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare Canberra:

National Health and Medical Research Council (2019).


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