Technical Information Report

AAMI TIR109: 2025

External transport of reusable medical devices for processing

AAMI

Advancing Safety in Health Technology

External transport of reusable medical devices for processing

Approved 5 March 2025 by
AAMI

Abstract: Provides guidance for health care facilities and offsite reprocessing centers for the external transportation of processed medical devices between these facilities (e.g., from one health care facility to another, between offsite reprocessing center and health care facility). It provides guidance on maintaining the integrity of sterilized items and transport for contaminated and processed items.

Keywords: external transport, medical device transport, transportation, cleaning, disinfection, sterilization

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Committee representation

Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation

Steam Sterilization Hospital Practices Working Group

This technical information report was developed by the AAMI Steam Sterilization Hospital Practices Working Group under the auspices of the AAMI Sterilization Standards Committee. Approval of the technical information report does not necessarily mean that all working group members voted for its approval.

At the time this technical information report was published, the **Steam Sterilization Hospital Practices Working Group** had the following members:

Cochairs:
Sarah Friedberg
Susan Klacik

Members:
Desiree Acedo
Cheri Ackert-Burr
Steven Adams, Sinai Hospital of Baltimore
Robin Adkins
Anas Aljabo, SteriLabs Canada Inc.
Rebecca Alvino
Jaime Amaya
Lindsay Arencibia
Rajee Arunan, Washington Adventist Hospital
Quatisha Ashley, Bone & Joint Institute at Hartford Hospital
Melissa Austin, United Health Services
Sean Balagna, Mercy Hospital St. Louis
Richard Bancroft, STERIS Corporation | Healthcare
Jennifer Bangle, Solventum (fka 3M Health Care)
Selendra Barefield
Leigh Anne Bartlett
Ralph J. Basile, Getinge USA
Jennifer Benolken, DuPont Tyvek Medical and Pharmaceutical Protection
Corazon Benson, Joe Dimaggio Children's Hospital
Lisa Berus, Treasure Valley Hospital
Dave Billman, Innovative Sterilization Technologies LLC
Timothy Blackwell
Kayleigh Lynn Bolitho, Health Partners
Anthony Bondon, Wellstar Kennestone Hospital
Rachel Bradley
Deborah Lynnette Bunn
Arlene Leimomi Bush, AdventHealth
John-John Gacita Cabrillos
Philip Ted Cantin, Mobile Medical International Corporation (fka VERDA Water Quality Systems)
Ryan Cashman, Penn Medicine - Pennsylvania Hospital
Cathy Castro, Instrumentum LLC (fka Vested Medical)
Arianna Celis Luna, Mesa Laboratories Biological Indicator Division- Bozeman Facility
Nancy Chobin
Horlando Cintron, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center Monmouth
Dorin Cioraca, SciCan Ltd
Fiona Collins, American Dental Association (ADA)
Edward Conklin, TidalHealth Peninsula Regional (fka Peninsula Regional Medical Center)
Lena Cordie-Bancroft, BSI Healthcare
Jeremy Criss
Jeri Culbertson, Black Hills Surgical Hospital
Aerienne Cunningham, Zuno Medical
Gaye Slaughter Currier, Mission Health System
Peter Daigle
Jacqueline A. Daley, Providence St Joseph Health System
Tiffany Darville

Nick Dassatti, Intuitive Surgical Inc
Nicholas Day, University Hospitals of Cleveland
Christophe Deneux, Becton Dickinson & Company
Mark Duro
Randy Eccleston, Northside Hospital Surgical Services Atlanta
Afif Jhoel Escheik, Crothall Healthcare
Adam Evans
Lee Ford, Atrium Health Floyd
Brian J. Fortier, Aorta Medical Inc
Sarah Frank, Element Materials Technology
Tracey French, Texas Health Resources
Sarah Friedberg, Stryker
Marcia Frieze, Case Medical Inc
Gloria H. Frost, Cardinal Health
Jeremy Gibson-Roark, Det Norske Veritas Region
Jennifer Greisen
Garland-Rhea Grisby
Michael D. Gudejko, Baystate Medical Center
Alexy Rose Hall
Ashley Hammer, Washington Regional Medical Center
Barbara Ann Harmer
Amani Hawsawi
Sunny Hays, Baylor Scott & White Medical Center - Temple
Tamara Heacock, Lee Health
Seth Hendee, SLH Consulting
Ebow Holdbrook-Smith, WellSpan Health
Jeffrey N. Holland, Evoqua Water Technologies LLC
Garrett Hollembeak
Timothy Hurtado, UT Southwestern Medical Center
Angel Jablonski, Mercy Health - St. Charles Hospital
David M. Jagrosse, David Jagrosse Consulting LLC
Angela G. Jensen, Rush Foundation Hospital
Jackie Daly Johnson, Flexible Packing Association
Warren Aaron Judge III, CGH Medical Center
Nalani Kalawe, Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC)
Susan Klacik
Marcy (Margaret) Konja, SpecialtyCare
Terra Kremer, Johnson & Johnson
Erin A. Kyle, Association of Perioperative Registered Nurses (AORN)
Rashawn Latimore
Rhashamekia Law, Memorial Hermann Healthcare System
Grace Levy-Bolton, FDA/CDRH
Angela M. Lewellyn, Advantage Support Services Inc
Jessie Lopez, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJ Barnabas Health)
Courtney Lynn Mace Davis, North Shore University Health System Evanston Hospital
Michael Matthews, Association of Medical Device Service Organizations (AMDSO)
John L. Mazzilli, Saddleback Memorial Medical Center
Josha McCarthy, Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital
Patrick J. McCormick, Bausch & Lomb Inc
Kathleen McMullen
Michelle Milner, St Tammany Health System
Jason Minutillo
Alexander Miseirvitch, B Braun of America Inc
Emily Mitzel, GE HealthCare
Jennifer L Morrissey, University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics
Harry Mullen, Central Sterilization Solutions
Frank E. Myers, UC San Diego Health, Hillcrest
Karen Nauss, Mount Auburn Hospital
Brian Newton, Newton Technologies, LLC
Warren S. Nist, Evolved Sterile Processing Consulting
Susumu Nozawa, Siemens Healthineers
Mary D. Olivera, Quality Processing Resource Group LLC

Paul Alton Parker, Zimmer Biomet
Kia Parker, The Ohio State Wexner Medical Center-University Hospital
Alpa Patel, Sotera Health LLC
Chris Pennucci
Bethany Louise Phillips, Association for Professionals in Infection Control & Epidemiology (APIC)
Nancy Pickens
Shelle Powell
Janet M. Prust, St. Croix Standards Consulting LLC
Dena Ramirez
Don Rotter, Ecolab
Viktoria (Tori) Ruiz, Sutter Health
Joseph Ruiz, One Brooklyn Health System
Vicki Sage, University of Rochester Medical Center
Debra Sams
Chuck Schaefer
Candace A. Schlicklin, Phoenix Children's Hospital
Richard William Schule, Cleveland Clinic
C. Wayne Sczublewski, Veterans Administration (VA) Central Office
Livia Senties, Universidad La Salle
Cynthia Seward, Kaiser Foundation Health Plan/Hospitals
Mikel E. Shans
Andrew Sharavara, Propper Manufacturing Co Inc
Felicia Sheriff
Steve Spencer, Owens & Minor
Dexter Stephen
Aiying Sun, Verrix LLC
Ashley Thompson
Jania Torreblanca, Michigan Medicine (University of Michigan Health System)
James Treharn, St. Peter's Health
Evan Trosvik, North Memorial Medical Center
Aaron Troutt, Williamson Medical Center
Julie Tuinstra, NAMSA
Miranda Van Pilsum-Johnson, Integra LifeSciences Corporation
Jim VanPietersom, Fairbanks Memorial Hospital
Sara Vinson, University of Florida
Roger Vu, Alcon Laboratories Inc
Eric Warren
Dean Wellman, Midmark Corporation
Christopher M. Whiting, Nationwide Children's Hospital
James Sidney Wiggs, Legacy Health System
Leslie Williams, Mayo Clinic
Matt Winchester
Nelson Winter, WellSpan Health
Jo Wood, Massachusetts General Hospital
Jon Wood, Healthcare Sterile Processing Association (HSPA)
Robin Woodland, Kaiser Foundation Health Plan/Hospitals
Stephanie L. Young
Roberto Zumbado, Philips

Alternates:
Rufino Achacoso III, Propper Manufacturing Co Inc
Hamza Ahmed, B Braun of America Inc
Joseph Avila, Memorial Hermann Healthcare System
Jennifer Barnickel, Instrumentum LLC (fka Vested Medical)
Nicola J. Bench, Becton Dickinson & Company
Damien S. Berg, Healthcare Sterile Processing Association (HSPA)
Jhmeid B. Billingslea, Advantage Support Services Inc
Sade Brown, Owens & Minor
Roberta Carrassi, Case Medical Inc
Donald Fisher, Veterans Administration (VA) Central Office
Dan B. Floyd, DuPont Tyvek Medical and Pharmaceutical Protection
Lorraine Floyd, Johnson & Johnson
Summer Griffis, Mesa Laboratories Biological Indicator Division- Bozeman Facility

Robin Lynn Holloway, Northside Hospital Cherokee
Nikki Kluck (Einerson), Solventum (fka 3M Health Care)
Paulo Roberto Laranjeira, FDA/CDRH
Alisha Loy, University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics
Viktoriya Lusignan, Getinge USA
Kelly Makimoto, SciCan Ltd
Carol Ann Malone, University Hospitals of Cleveland
Chelsea Moon, NAMSA
Derek Mortisen, Intuitive Surgical Inc
Walt Oko, Innovative Sterilization Technologies LLC
Jennifer Ormsby, Association for Professionals in Infection Control & Epidemiology (APIC)
Karen E. Owens, STERIS Corporation | Healthcare
Katia Petrov, Cardinal Health
Jason Pope, Sotera Health LLC
Klaus Roth, Quality Processing Resource Group LLC
Mandy Ryan, Stryker
Michael J. Schoene, Bausch & Lomb Inc
Len Sparks, Mobile Medical International Corporation (fka VERDA Water Quality Systems)
Dawn Tomac
Donald P. Tumminelli, HIGHPOWER Validation Testing & Lab Services Inc
Jill A. Warren, Siemens Healthineers

NOTE Participation by federal agency representatives in the development of this technical information report does not constitute endorsement by the federal government or any of its agencies.

At the time this technical information report was published, the AAMI Sterilization Standards Committee had the following members:

Cochairs:
Paulo R. Laranjeira
Janet M. Prust

Members:
Gregory Darnall Aldrich
Anas Aljabo, SteriLabs Canada Inc.
Brett Anderson, Cochlear Ltd
Jennifer R. Asleson, Quality, Microbiology & Sterilization Services LLC
Richard Bancroft, STERIS Corporation | Healthcare
Leigh Anne Bartlett
Damien S. Berg, Healthcare Sterile Processing Association (HSPA)
Prithul Bom, Regulatory Technology Services (RTS)
Marie K. Brewer, UnityPoint Health - St. Luke's Hospital - Cedar Rapids
Trabue Daley Bryans, BryKor LLC
Nicholas Brydon, NextBeam LLC
Jonathan Burdach, Nanosonics Limited
Rai Chowdhary, The KPI System
Robert Coley, HCA Healthcare
Emily Craven, Boston Scientific Corporation
Jacqueline A. Daley, Providence St Joseph Health System
Christophe Deneux, Becton Dickinson & Company
Kumbirai Dhliwayo, Kumby Consulting
Chase Elms
Gordon M. Ely, LexaMed Ltd
Afif Jhoel Escheik, Crothall Healthcare
Deannard Esnard
Nicole Felderman, CIVCO Medical Solutions
Brian J. Fortier, Aorta Medical Inc
Daniel Fowler, WuXi AppTec Inc
Abhishek (Abhi) Gautam, DDL, Inc.
Jacqueline Gosier
Suzanne Goss
Magnus Graham, BSI Healthcare
Shelley Hagan, Henry Ford Health
Ashley Hammer, Washington Regional Medical Center

Douglas F. Harbrecht, Sterility Assurance LLC
Jeanetta Harris
Deborah A. Havlik, DA Havlik Consulting
Amani Hawsawi
Crystal Heishman, U of L Hospital - University of Louisville
Ebow Holdbrook-Smith, WellSpan Health
Tisza Holt, Insulet Corporation
Mollie J. Holter, MicroBio Consulting LLC
Stephanie Jean Homuth, Hennepin County Medical Center Warehouse
Clark W. Houghtling, Cosmed Group Inc
Angela G. Jensen, Rush Foundation Hospital
Nicholas Kalanta, McLane Children's Hospital
Amy Jo Karren, WL Gore & Associates Inc
Erin A. Kyle, Association of Perioperative Registered Nurses (AORN)
Byron J. Lambert, Abbott Laboratories
Paulo Roberto Laranjeira, FDA/CDRH
Rhashamekia Law, Memorial Hermann Healthcare System
Stacey Law
Alaina N Lett
Marissa Jones Lewis, Veterans Administration (VA) Central Office
Emily Lorcheim, ClorDiSys Solutions, Inc
Karana M Pierre
John L. Mazzilli, Saddleback Memorial Medical Center
Patrick J. McCormick, Bausch & Lomb Inc
Gerald E. McDonnell, Johnson & Johnson
Russell (Rusty) Mills, Zimmer Biomet
Atila Nozari, Solventum (fka 3M Health Care)
Gerry A. O'Dell, O'Dell & Hodge Consulting
James O'Reilly, St Joseph Health System - Trinity Health
Ken Paddock, Baxter Healthcare Corporation
Alberto Guzman Paret, Cordis US Corp
Kia Parker, The Ohio State Wexner Medical Center-University Hospital
Kimberly Patton, Performance Review Institute MedAccred
Annemarie Pelloski, Michigan Medicine (University of Michigan Health System)
Nancy Pickens
Julissa Pina, Instylla, Inc.
Shane Pinkston, Getinge USA
Janet M. Prust, St. Croix Standards Consulting LLC
Beth Rayfield, IU Health North Hospital
Joan E. Rickard, Montefiore Medical Center
Viktoria (Tori) Ruiz, Sutter Health
Angela Salmen
Linda Sue Schultz, Northside Hospital Surgical Services Atlanta
Sopheak Srun, Quality Tech Services LLC
Mark Swanson, Quality and Regulatory Expert Partners (QRX)
Sherri Taylor
Julie TerWee, Pfizer Parenteral Center of Excellence
James Treharn, St. Peter's Health
Melissa Vargas
Sara Vinson, University of Florida
Wendy Wangsgard, ICU Medical Inc
James Sidney Wiggs, Legacy Health System
Leslie Williams, Mayo Clinic
Martell Winters, Sotera Health LLC
Roberto Zumbado, Philips

Alternates:

Joseph Avila, Memorial Hermann Healthcare System
Jennifer Benolken, DuPont Tyvek Medical and Pharmaceutical Protection
Mark Bogs, ICU Medical Inc
Stacy Bohl, Boston Scientific Corporation
Kevin Bovee, Insulet Corporation
Richard Burgess, BSI Healthcare
Densley Coke, Densley Coke Person
Aaron David DeMent, Sotera Health LLC

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April Doering, Solventum (fka 3M Health Care)
Mary Ann Drosnock, Getinge USA
Michael Flanagan, Zimmer Biomet
Anna M. Grayson, Grayson Associates
Samantha Mashell Hodge, O'Dell & Hodge Consulting
Cathy Leckwart, WuXi AppTec Inc
Paul Lorcheim, ClorDiSys Solutions, Inc
James A. Maher, Becton Dickinson & Company
David Ford McGoldrick, Abbott Laboratories
Afroz Nazneen, Regulatory Technology Services (RTS)
James Noyes, Cardinal Health
Eric Peryer, Baxter Healthcare Corporation
Long Pham, DDL, Inc.
Christine L. Render, Cosmed Group Inc
Petra Richards, Kaiser Foundation Health Plan/Hospitals
Susan Rogers, Veterans Administration (VA) Central Office
Krista Schulte, Quality Tech Services LLC
Lisa Ward, STERIS Corporation | Healthcare
Jon Wood, Healthcare Sterile Processing Association (HSPA)

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Suggestions for improving this document are invited. Comments and suggested revisions should be sent to Standards, AAMI, 901 N. Glebe Road, Suite 300, Arlington, VA 22203 or standards@aami.org.

Introduction

Due to logistical and financial reasons, it has become increasingly common for devices to be processed in a separate building adjacent to the facility, across the street, or even miles away from the point of use. This practice introduces new challenges for processing medical devices, including increased time for transportation to the processing location, processing, selection of appropriate transport carrier and vehicle, separation of contaminated items from those that have been processed, cleaning and disinfection of transport carrier and vehicle, the safety and training of transport personnel, and other considerations.

External transport of reusable medical devices for processing

1 Scope

1.1 Inclusions

This document provides guidance for health care facilities (see 3.9) and offsite reprocessing centers (see 3.11) for the external transportation of processed medical devices (see 3.10) between these facilities (e.g., from one health care facility to another, between offsite reprocessing center and health care facility). It provides guidance on maintaining the integrity of sterilized items and transport for contaminated (see 3.3) and processed (see 3.14) items.

1.2 Exclusions

This TIR does not provide guidance for transport of single use items which are supplied sterile from the manufacturer. Single use sterile items are often transported alongside items that have been processed by the facility, such as a picked/loaded case cart.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

3.1
bioburden
population of viable microorganisms on or in a product and/or sterile barrier system

[SOURCE: ISO 11139:2018, 3.23]

3.2
cargo space
enclosed area within transport vehicle (3.23) for transporting items from one location to another

3.3
contamination
(contaminated)
presence of material (e.g., chemical, biochemical, or microorganism) not intended to be part of a product or process.

[SOURCE: Kilmer Glossary of Terms for Microbiological Quality and Sterility Assurance 2021]