General Reprocessing Guidelines

Physical Space:

- Reprocessing should occur in a separate designated area
- Reprocessing area should have a proper one-way workflow (dirty to clean)
- Have a sufficient counter and storage space to handle the volume of work
- Use a dedicated sink to clean items (not a handwashing sink)

Process:

- Must be done by qualified staff who have been trained
- Always clean items prior to disinfection or sterilization
- Clean and disinfect reusable cleaning brushes after every use and store dry
- Reprocess instruments in the open and unlocked position
- Never overload sterilization packages
- Use approved packaging for sterilizer(s) used (e.g. wraps/pouches/cassettes)
- Put an internal chemical indicator (CI) inside all sterilization packages
- External CIs must be used for all sterilization packages
- Label sterilization packages with date, contents, sterilizer used, lot number and staff initials
- Log the sterilizer cycle including date, time, temperature, pressure, contents, and staff initials beyond the sealed edge
- Each load printout must be checked and signed to verify that the required time, temperature, and pressure has been met, and kept onsite
- Biological indicator (BI) testing must be done every day a sterilizer is used and for each type of cycle/setting that is used
- BI must be included with every load containing implantable devices
- Load/packages are not released until the results of BI is available. CI (Type 5 or 6) must be used if load/packages are to be released prior to the BI results
- For dynamic air removal type (pre-vacuum) sterilizers, perform CI test (Bowie-Dick test) every day the sterilizer is used

Don't forget:

- Never reuse or reprocess an item intended for single use
- Follow manufacturer's instructions for the use (MIFU) for installation, operation, maintenance of medical items and sterilizer(s)
- Immediate-Use Steam Sterilization (IUSS) or flash sterilization must not be used – operative scheduling and lack of instruments do not qualify as reasons to use IUSS

DURHAM REGION HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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