

WORCESTERSHIRE LMC

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2007 EDITION

DECONTAMINATION OF MEDICAL INSTRUMENTS

We are concerned that there is confusion with regard to sterilisation and decontamination of medical instruments. The GPC have been giving us some guidance. The situation is not entirely clear but the Department of Health have informed the GPC that there will be no change in the legislative and regulatory framework that will apply to practices from the 1st April 2007. However, GP practices will need to (and should already) comply with current legislation and regulations for sterilisation and decontamination. If they have not already done so practices will need to take steps to ensure that they are in compliance. Unfortunately it is the responsibility of individual practices to ensure that they are compliant with current legislation.

There has been a change in legislation affecting PCTs, who are now obliged to ensure that organisations from which they commission healthcare services are in compliance with current legislation - hence the recent letters to practices informing them of "new regulations". Current legislation and regulations are complex and scattered across a number of sources. There is no one central guidance document covering this area. As a consequence, it may be challenging for GP practices to independently interpret the current requirements.

A number of key documents and sources that may assist practices are detailed at the end of this article. In view of the confusion currently surrounding decontamination, the GPC has requested that the Department of Health and Chief Medical Officer take steps to rectify the situation.

Those practices who decontamination facilities meet current requirements can of course continue to use their own in-house facilities. In many cases it may not be practical or cost effective for GP practices to undertake sterilisation and decontamination in-house. In such cases a number of alternative options are available including switch to single use instruments, sending instruments for sterilisation at an off-site location that is compliant or use a combination of the above. The LMC has wondered if there may be scope for a GP Consortium to take over both purchasing and off-site sterilisation. Essex LMC has produced a guidance document which you may find helpful and is available at:

<http://www.wessexlmcs.com/page112.html>

Further information is available from the following website:

NHS Decontamination Programme website:

<http://deconprogramme.dh.gov.uk/default.aspx>

NHS National Decontamination Training Programme:

http://www.decontamination.nhs.uk/lms/nhs_splash/nhs_splash.asp

Council of the European Communities Directive 93/42/EEC:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31993L0042:EN:HTML>

Health Service Circular 1999/178:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/LettersAndCirculars/HealthServiceCirculars/HealthServiceCircularsArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4004969&chk=FGE%2BEj

Health Service Circular 1999/179:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/Healthservicecirculars/DH_4004321

Health Service Circular 2000/032:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/LettersAndCirculars/HealthServiceCirculars/HealthServiceCircularsArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4002990&chk=sHEhLb

Health Technical Memorandum 2010:

http://195.92.246.148/knowledge_network/documents/HTM2010%20Sterilization%20Management%20policy%202003115124130578.pdf

Health Technical Memorandum 2030:

<http://www.grs.nhs.uk/instantkb13/Attachments/htm2030-GUID3732f3f645624282abc86223fb55e6ea.pdf>

National Decontamination Strategy (National Standards - Local Delivery):

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Policyandguidance/Organisationpolicy/Estatesandfacilitiesmanagement/EngineeringEnvironmentAndTechnology/DH_4118225

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**THIS NEWLETTER IS PRODUCED FROM THE LMC OFFICE AT
ST STEPHENS SURGERY**

The next LMC meeting will be 10 May 2007