

Disposable Medical Equipment

OP-001141

I. SCOPE / PURPOSE

- A. The purpose of this policy is to identify proper handling of medical equipment that is considered to be disposable or single use. This policy pertains to all field employees of Armstrong Ambulance.
- B. **Disposable Medical Equipment:** medical equipment that is to be disposed of after it has been used once.

II. POLICY

- A. All Armstrong vehicles that are equipped to provide patient care are to be stocked with disposable medical equipment that is functional, not expired, clean and unused/unopened. Examples of disposable medical equipment are:
 - Suction Canister/Tubing
 - Bandaging
 - Sterile Water / Normal Saline
 - Oxygen delivery devices (Nasal cannula, Non-rebreather, BVM (Bi-Valve Mask) etc.)
- B. All employees should be familiar with the use and maintenance of all equipment and supplies within the vehicle in which he or she is working. All equipment and supplies are to be used in the manner for which they were intended.
- C. Employees who fail to follow the procedures outlined below may be subject to disciplinary action.

III. PROCEDURE

A. Disposal

Any disposable item that has been opened or removed from its original packaging is considered "used" and should be discarded and not considered for future patient use.

1. Contaminated Items

Any disposable item that has come in contact with body fluid must be considered contaminated. All contaminated, disposable materials must be considered potentially infectious and placed in impervious red plastic bags clearly marked with the bio-hazardous waste symbol and sealed prior to disposal. Grossly contaminated or wet, dripping waste must be doubled bagged. Red bio-hazard waste bags should be disposed of at the receiving facility in bio-hazard waste containers after patient care has been terminated, prior to returning your unit to service.

2. Sharps Disposal

Sharps, by definition, shall be considered as any object or instrument with the ability to pierce the skin. This includes needles, syringes, scalpels and razor blades.

Each sharp shall be disposed of properly following the steps below:

- Employees must utilize the built in safety devices for the specific product
- Un-capped sharps will never be re-capped or handed person to person.
- Sharps will be placed directly into the provided sharps containers which are leak proof and puncture resistant and are labeled with appropriate biohazard markings and color-coding.
- Containers will be mounted or placed as close to the work areas in which procedures will take place.

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- When containers reach the fill line clearly marked on the container the lids must be locked in place and taped over.
- The containers will then be placed into the 'RED' Bio Hazard bags and tied then placed into the appropriate containers located at each station.
- Sharps will NEVER be forced into full containers and full containers shall only be placed in the designated bio hazard refuse containers at an Armstrong base. They shall never be discarded at any other facility or location.

3. Non-Contaminated Items

Used, but not contaminated disposable waste can be discarded in any waste receptacle.

B. Restocking

Armstrong maintains strict control of its medical supply inventory from the Central Supply room located at the Arlington Headquarters. The Support Services Technician (SST) is responsible for maintaining this inventory and distributing it to each base several times each week. Each base will be supplied with enough stock to maintain its designated trucks for the period of 1-3 days with normal call volume.

A properly stocked ambulance should be more than sufficient to get through a shift. In the event that the crew needs to re-stock before their shift is complete they should contact the Communication Center or on-duty Field Operations Manager (FOM) for permission to return to their base to re-supply their ambulance.

If stock at a particular base is not enough to restock any one ambulance, the crew should contact the FOM and request a re-supply from Central Stock. The FOM must record all items removed from the Central Supply room on the sheets provided so that the inventory can be accounted for in the software. Only supervisors with a key are permitted to remove inventory from the Central Supply room.

C. Linen

All dirty linens provided by Armstrong must be returned to Armstrong's internal linen service via laundry hampers at each base. This includes sheets, blankets, towels and pillow cases. Linens acquired from another facility should be returned to that facility's linen services drop off whenever possible. If not possible, facility linens can be returned in Armstrong's linen bins.

D. Expired and Expiring Medications or Supplies

Certain disposable medical equipment and most medications have expiration dates. Employees are required to check expiration dates as part of their Vehicle Check-off Lists at the start of each shift and any item that has expired must be placed out of service. Boxes for Expired Items are available at each base and will be managed by the SST or his/her designee.

NOTE: Items with a month/year expiration such as 09/14 expire on the last day of that month. So in this example, the product is good through September 30, 2014.

E. Overstock

If a crew finds that their ambulance has been stocked with items greater than what is required by their checklist, the excess items should be returned to the base stock cabinets.

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CONTACT / DEPARTMENT: Operations, Clinical Services
REFERENCES: *Bio Hazardous Waste Disposal RM-001158*
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Richard Raymond, CEO