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# 5 steps to implementing **an effective infection control plan.**

Infection control is vital to the effective running of any care home. But with daily operational pressures it's easy for hygiene to become a lower priority. If this is an area you're thinking about, this simple 5-step guide from Miele is here to help!

## What is an infection control plan and why do you need one?

An infection control plan is a series of policies and procedures that every care home should have in place to ensure hygienic standards, prevent the spread of infection and keep residents, staff and visitors safe in the care environment. The plan acts as the 'rulebook' for managers, staff and even visitors to follow. Even the most conscientious

team can struggle to control infection diseases if they don't have guidelines to follow, and this is where your documented infection control plan comes in really useful.

Every care establishment is different depending on its size and the type of care it provides to residents, so naturally policies will differ from home to home.

**However, here are some of the factors and regulations to take into account when introducing or revising your infection control plan for laundry procedures;**



**Hand  
hygiene**



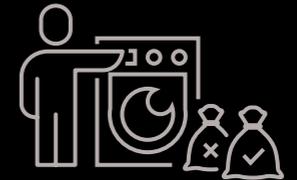
**Personal  
protection**



**Effective  
decontamination**



**Regulation**



**Brief  
staff**

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### 1. Hand hygiene

Whilst clean hands might sound obvious, this is the single most important factor for preventing the spread of infection and should underpin the rest of your policy. It's vital for staff, visitors and residents to effectively wash and disinfect their hands to ensure they're not transferring harmful germs or micro-organisms to other people, equipment or surfaces. There are no hard and fast rules but [plenty of useful guidelines for hand washing](#). Your individual policy should define the process that should be followed and when, for example after 'hands-on' contact with a resident, or after dealing with soiled or contaminated laundry.

### Did you know...

**80% of common infections are spread by hands, and washing your hands 5 times a day has been shown to significantly reduce the frequency of colds, the flu and other infections?**

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## 2. Personal Protection

Your infection control plan needs to define if and when staff should use personal protection, such as disposable gloves and aprons. These may be more necessary for a nursing home, for example, where staff are more likely to come into contact with bodily fluids and aprons may need to be worn to protect their uniforms. Carefully consider all the activities and instances where personal protection measures may need to be taken and define the process. For example, an employee may need to use gloves and an apron to load soiled laundry into the washing machine. They should remove these and dispose of them safely before handling clean laundry at the end of the cycle or moving onto a different task.

### Think...

**...is personal protective equipment easily accessible in the right locations within in your home such as the laundry and care areas? Do your staff know how to dispose of PPE hygienically once used?**

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### 3. Effective decontamination

Dealing with waste and potentially infectious substances as a carer is often inevitable, but it's vital to make sure that any soiled items are effectively decontaminated. Consider a sluice sink to remove as much residue as possible from soiled materials before entering the washing cycle. Ensure that your laundry facility consists of commercial machines that are capable of handling larger loads and consistently washing to a safe standard. Once the washing cycle has finished, take care to prevent cross-contamination by ensuring clean washing does not come into contact with dirty items.

### Did you know...

...the HSE provides best practice guidelines for healthcare linen processors.

[Find them here.](#)

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### 4. Regulation

As you'll know there are many regulations impacting care homes and several that relate to infection control. It's vital to ensure industry guidelines and regulations are being met across different operations and the infection control plan is an effective way of ensuring your processes comply. Here are a couple of examples in laundry operations...

The HSE infection control guidelines define the decontamination of linen for health and social care and state the times and temperatures washing should be held at during the cycle. Ensure your appliance is tested and approved as being able to meet these conditions.

These are either;

**Ten minutes at  
65°C or over**

**OR**

**Three minutes  
at 71°C or over**

Machines with Water Regulatory Advisory Scheme (WRAS) category 5 are also available in the Ireland. WRAS category 5 prevents the main water supply becoming contaminated from potentially hazardous or infectious waste. Opting for an appliance fitted with a one-way valve ensures that potentially infected water exists though the normal waste system and represents best-practice in laundry equipment in the care sector.

### Tip...

**...make sure  
you 'test' your  
infection control  
plan's relevance to  
all key regulations**

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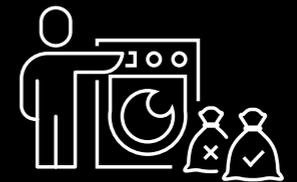
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### 5. Brief staff

To effectively and consistently roll out your infection control plan throughout the home, employees need to be thoroughly briefed and up-to-date with the correct procedures, particularly in the operational areas that might experience a higher-than-usual staff turnover, like the laundry room. Ensure your infection control plan is properly communicated, easy to understand and accessible at all times. It may also be helpful to distribute posters, flyers and reminders in various operational areas to remind staff of the correct procedures, for example, above the hand washing basin.

### Did you know...

**...staff communication is one of the most important parts of a successful infection control policy. Sharing information and keeping paperwork up to date can save lives.**

# Miele

We hope you've found these 5 steps helpful.  
If you're looking for more information on the prevention  
and management of infection in care homes

**[take a look here at this useful article.](#)**

To find out how the Professional Division of Miele can  
help you adhere to infection control procedures and  
provide compliant laundry equipment,

**get in touch on [professional@miele.ie](mailto:professional@miele.ie)**

**call (01) 4610710**

**or visit [www.miele.ie/professional](http://www.miele.ie/professional)**

** [Miele Professional](#)**