

Healthcare Linen Customer and Media Talking Points

Death is always a tragedy.

- We are saddened by the loss of five people in connection with the UPMC mold crisis.
- It is a sad and complex case complicated by the lengthy period of time (two years and counting) that the matter has been under epidemiologic review.
- We can only hope lessons were learned that can prevent such infections from occurring in the future.

While tragic, this was an isolated incident.

- Each year, tens of thousands of tons of linens are laundered for healthcare facilities around the globe without incident.
- The Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) and Pennsylvania Department of Health were unable to determine a definitive source for the fungal infections.
- Since the late 1970s, CDC can identify approximately 21 cases connecting laundry hygiene to healthcare associated infections (HAIs) in the United States.
- We wish there were no incidents; however, you are 1,000 times more likely to be struck by lightning than affected by a linen-related HAI.
- UPMC continues to contract with the laundry to process its linens.
- I'm not familiar with the laundry processes involved.

TRSA has helped create industry standards for linens in the healthcare industry.

- TRSA established its Hygienically Clean and Hygienically Clean – Healthcare certifications in 2012 employing best management practices in the processing, transportation and storage of clean linen.
 - These processes are subject to independent, third party testing and verification of safe, hygienic standards for the lifecycle of healthcare linens.
- TRSA educates its members who operate more than 1,200 facilities worldwide regarding the highest standards of hygiene and best practices.
- TRSA was instrumental in the 2006 founding of the only other healthcare laundry accreditation program in the U.S., The Healthcare Laundry Accreditation Council (HLAC).

TRSA's Hygienically Clean Healthcare Certification ensures best practices are in place for hospitals and other healthcare related facilities.

- TRSA defines hygienically clean as "free of pathogens in sufficient numbers to cause human illness."
- Compliance with this standard is based on microbial testing, documentation of laundry best management practices and facility inspections
- TRSA's Hygienically Clean standard is the only North American standard that tests to internationally recognized bioburden thresholds.
- Best practices documentation applies to all aspects of laundry processing including transportation of the textiles to their destination under the care and custody of the customer.
- TRSA's certification program employs third-party, quantified biological testing and inspection of healthcare linens. HLAC does not.

TRSA's Hygienically Clean Healthcare Certification protocols address airborne contamination of laundered linen and are continuously upgraded to improve monitoring of laundry performance.

- Quarterly sampling of cleaned linen is required to ensure it is hygienically clean. Testing determines the absence of specific microorganisms and quantifies the laundry's effectiveness in removing yeast, mold and other microbes.
- Such testing also takes place to initially certify laundries. On several occasions, plants have passed the inspection for processing, training and other production standards requirements but failed microbiological testing for yeast and molds. On these occasions, the facilities were alerted to identify the problem and take the appropriate corrective action.
- Nearly 3,000 healthcare linens and garments have been tested for microbial yeast and mold content with zero detection of rhizopus.
- Inspection to determine laundries' adherence to best practices is thorough and consistent as inspectors use a checklist that covers all laundry functions critical to ensuring cleanliness.
- The Hygienically Clean Advisory Board, composed of professionals from laundry, healthcare and academia, recently enhanced the standard by adding a second "supplemental inspection" within a facility's three-year certification period, as well as identifying critical control points and surfaces in a laundry to test to identify potential risks.

We follow procedures related to healthcare linens that ensure their hygienically clean condition throughout the delivery and storage process.

- Our laundry is a member of TRSA, an industry leader in commercial laundry best practices, which promotes these hygienically clean procedures.
- Procedures for the safe and hygienic care and handling of hospital linens have been in place for more a decade.
- Industry best practices dictate that you: package, transport, and store clean textiles and fabrics by methods that ensure their cleanliness and protect them from dust and soil during interfacility loading, transport, and unloading. (according to the CDC)
- *TRSA's Healthcare Service Operations Manual* takes the CDC standard further detailing best practices and methods to use for storing and delivering clean linens to hospitals and other healthcare clients, i.e., ensure that hygienically clean linen delivered to hospitals is appropriately packaged to minimize contamination providing a functional barrier between it and contaminants and potential contaminants including:
 - Placing clean linen in a properly cleaned cart, covering it with disposable material or properly cleaned reusable textile material and securing the cover. The cart must also be properly cleaned and sanitized between each use.
 - Assembling and storing the clean linen in a clean linen work area that is functionally separated from the soiled linen area and washroom. One way of achieving this is to ensure that the area is properly ventilated and to create a functional barrier.



Hygiene and safety are top priorities for TRSA members.

- TRSA's SafeTRSA program provides resources and training to members that address some of the textile industries biggest challenges.
- TRSA annually surveys members regarding occupational injury and illness data that help ensure those members exceed industry standards in key areas, including handling of spoiled linens.
- TRSA holds an annual TRSA Safety Summit to identify risks in laundry plant and service operations and propose industry-leading solutions.

TRSA's Healthcare Committee provides resources, training and support to members operating in the healthcare space.

- The committee has and continues to develop a series of training videos related to the proper processes and procedures to avoid contamination of healthcare linens.
- TRSA's Healthcare Services Operations Manual is a leading industry guide and is updated regularly.
- The committee provides marketplace intelligence for the continued development and updating of the TRSA Hygienically Clean Healthcare certification program.