1.1 STANDARD PRECAUTIONS

PURPOSE
Standard precautions are applied as a first-line approach to infection control. These form the basis for your decision-making and practice. Standard precautions are a set of guidelines based on the assumption that all blood and body fluids are potentially infectious. In the context of sterilizing practice and the Standard Operating Procedures, standard precautions include:

Hand Hygiene
Examples of when hands should be cleaned
- When first arrive at workplace/clinic
- Before and after commencing a procedure
- After handling equipment / instruments soiled with blood or body fluids
- After direct contact with blood or body secretions
- After cleaning the environment
- When you move from a dirty area (such as the instrument cleaning area) to a clean area (such as the sterilizing area)
- After the removal of Personal Protective Equipment (gloves, gown, face shields etc)
- When you go to have something to eat or drink
- After you have gone to the toilet and again upon re-entering the clinical area
- After coughing, sneezing or wiping your nose
- At end of the shift immediately before leaving the workplace

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
Is to be worn to protect the healthcare worker and patients as this minimises the risk of infection transmission when having contact with blood and body fluids. PPE must be removed when leaving the cleaning area and replaced with fresh items on returning. At a minimum a single use disposable plastic apron or other fluid resistant gown shall be worn over clinical gowns each time instrument reprocessing is undertaken. This plastic apron must be removed and disposed of before resuming patient care activities in the clinical area and when accessing items in clean/ sterile storage areas.

Gloves
Heavy duty gloves are to be worn when handling items for cleaning. The allocation of heavy duty gloves shall be one pair for one person for one day, unless damaged or grossly soiled
- Single use gloves are to be changed after use
- Appropriate gloves as recommended by the manufacturer are to be worn when handling enzymatic cleaners and acid based agents/chemicals

Face Shields or Safety Glasses and Masks
- Safety glasses and face shields are multi-use and must be cleaned, after each use, with detergent and water
- The mask must cover the mouth and nose completely and be tied, so that there is no gaping at the side of the mask
- Masks are worn once and then discarded
- Remove the mask by undoing the ties; and avoid touching the front of the mask

Fluid Resistant Gowns/Aprons
- Long sleeved fluid resistant gowns/aprons and protective sleeves are to be used if there is a possibility of clothes or skin becoming wet or contaminated with blood or body fluids e.g. when cleaning contaminated instruments
- If, for some reason, your clothes become soiled with blood or body fluids, you must wash the area on your body soiled and replace your clothes. In some circumstances, you may need to have a shower

Occupational Health & Safety requirements
- Fully enclosed waterproof non-slip shoes should be worn
- Clean clothing attire as per units protocol
- Hair pulled back neatly with hair and beards covered during instrument reprocessing procedures
- Short nails
- Wearing of jewellery, nail polish and artificial nails as per local policy
- Cuts and skin abrasions are covered with a waterproof dressing and should be examined by a medical practitioner before commencement/returning to work in the reprocessing area. (Check local policy & HR)
- Hearing protection when using high pressure equipment e.g. air guns
- Report incidents/accidents to Senior Dental Assistant and complete the relevant documentation

Reference: Reference: AS/NZS 4815; NHMRC Australian Guidelines For The Prevention And Control Of Infection In Healthcare 2010; ADA Guidelines for infection control 2012
1.2 SOILED PICKUP COLLECTION

PURPOSE
Soiled pickup collection refers to the collection of used dental instruments and equipment. There are various scenarios that the following principles apply to aim to minimise damage to instruments and prevent the cross contamination of clean and sterile items.

These scenarios include:
- Pickup of soiled instruments at dedicated scheduled times and transferred/transported to a separate instrument reprocessing area/site
- Where staff are required to transfer used instruments after each patient appointment, to a reprocessing area.

Refer to SOP 1.4 Chemical and detergent mixtures
Refer to SOP 1.6 Manual Cleaning for immersible items- For those items that are unable to be cleaned using a washer disinfector or ultrasonic cleaner
Refer to SOP 1.7 Manual Cleaning for non-immersible items – For those items that are unable to be submerged under water
Refer to SOP 1.8 Ultrasonic Cleaners

OPERATING PROCEDURE
- Application of standard precautions
- Trolley/container to be used for this purpose should be dedicated, enclosed and with solid bottom shelving and labelled appropriately e.g. contaminated
- Instrument sets are to be kept together and not mixed. Visible soils (e.g. blood, body fluid, filling materials) are to be removed chair-side by methods such as damp or dry wiping during and after the procedure
- In order to prevent soil from drying on instruments, other products such as pre-cleaning solutions may be appropriate. To avoid damage and potential for sharps injury single loose items must be secured prior to being placed into the transport container
- Plastic containers for transportation are to be leak proof and puncture resistant with sealable lids and be labelled for user area identification
- To prevent instruments from being damaged do not place heavy instruments on light instruments
- The composition of instrument transport containers and the method of transportation will vary greatly from District to District. It is highly recommended that an Occupation Health and Safety Risk Assessment be undertaken locally to identify risks and implement control measures that will minimise the risk to staff of sustaining an injury. Changes to the schedules will be through Management and communicated to all staff involved
- Do not over load trolleys/containers
- Follow a dedicated route
- Do not leave unsecured trolleys/containers unattended in corridors. Contaminated instrument containers must be stored in a dedicated secured area away from public access
- Report immediately to Senior Dental Assistant if there are any issues

Occupational Health & Safety requirements
- There is to be no lifting above shoulder height

Reference: AS/NZS 4815; NHMRC Australian Guidelines For The Prevention And Control Of Infection In Healthcare 2010; ADA Guidelines for infection control 2012
1.3 SORTING PRIOR TO CLEANING

PURPOSE
On receipt into the cleaning area, items should be sorted according to type, checked for completeness or defects and sorted into the method of cleaning to allow the staff member to follow through to user area promptly.

OPERATING PROCEDURE
- Application of standard precautions
- Care must be taken when trying to retrieve instruments from trays or containers as a sharps injury could occur, ensure you can see what you are retrieving
- Check if items are to be priority processed and process accordingly
- Perform a visual check of instruments for damage and to ensure instrument sets are complete
- Instruments are to be cleaned and sterilized prior to being sent for repairs. NB: check with manufacturer of instrument prior to cleaning and sterilizing items for repairs as some items may be further damaged by these processes
- Do not throw anything out, if unsure, check with the Senior Dental Assistant
- Check manuals if unsure of cleaning process. If still unsure, check with Senior Dental Assistant (do not guess)
- Instruments not belonging to the oral health facility (e.g. loan instruments or visiting dentists with private equipment), are to be checked, multi-part instruments dismantled, labelled and undergo a cleaning process prior to packaging and sterilization

Report immediately the following issues as they arise
- Immediately report any sharps such as blades, needles or broken glass left in containers. Report to the Senior Dental Assistant and document on relevant incident report e.g. near miss occupational exposure or workplace health and safety incident
- If instrument parts are missing follow facility procedure and report immediately to the Senior Dental Assistant
- Report any damaged or broken instruments to the Senior Dental Assistant
- Report heavily soiled items from user areas to the Senior Dental Assistant (items should have gross blood and debris removed immediately following a procedure and prior to returning the item to CSD for processing)
- Do not reprocess ‘single use only’ items, report to the Senior Dental Assistant if this does occur
- Non-compliance to processes

CLEANING PROCESS:
Sort items according to cleaning process as per manufacturers instructions:
- Manual cleaning
- Cannulated/lumened items
  - Not able to be immersed in water e.g. dental handpieces
  - Able to be immersed in water e.g. Amalgam carrier
- Items requiring lubrication
- Mechanical cleaning
  - Ultrasonic
  - Automated washer disinfector – batch washer

Reference: AS/NZS 4815; NHMRC Australian Guidelines For The Prevention And Control Of Infection In Healthcare 2010; ADA Guidelines for infection control 2012
1.4 CHEMICAL & DETERGENT MIXTURES

PURPOSE
Breaking down and removal of blood, proteins and debris during washing stage can be achieved manually or mechanically. Prior to the purchase of cleaning solutions consideration needs to be given to the chemicals compatibility with the dental device, intended cleaning process and the chemicals storage requirements.

Manual Wash
Properties: Mild alkaline instrument detergent
- pH range: 8.0-10.8
- Low foaming properties
- Non-corrosive
- Non-toxic
- Non-abrasive
- Free rinsing
- Bio-degradable
- Preferably liquid
Use and rate of concentration: as per manufacturers instructions

Mechanical Wash
Properties: Alkaline instrument detergent or as per mechanical washer manufacturers instructions
- pH range: 8.0-11.5
- Biodegradable
- Nonabrasive
- Low foaming
- Free rinsing
- Preferably liquid
Use and rate of concentration: As per manufacturers instructions, automatic dispensing system is preferred

Enzymatic Cleaners
Includes enzyme pre cleaners and enzymatic detergents
Breaks down proteinaceous matter
Approved by the instrument manufacturer
Specific PPE may be required
Used as per manufacturers instructions i.e.
- Dilution if required, solution temperature, application time and product used within expiry date
- Used on items when blood or debris has dried or hardened

Acid Base Agents
Use: Only used on stainless steel surfaces for intermittently descaling or destaining
Follow chemical manufacturers instructions, including safety precautions, dilution and instrument compatibility
Rubber or nitrile gloves are to be worn when handling acid based agents
Dissimilar instruments should not be processed at the same time
Mix the agent as per manufacturers instructions
Only mix when required and discard at the end of the day

Lubricant
Must be water miscible and compatible with instrument and sterilizing agent

Hand hygiene liquid
Approved for use by Infection Control

Hand Cream
Moisturiser and barrier cream should not be applied in the reprocessing area as they can effect the penetration of the sterilant/steam and compromise the wrapping materials. They must be approved for use by Infection Control

Steel Coat
Stainless steel cleaner: used on the outside of machines as per manufacturers instructions (stainless steel only)
Clean cloth used for application and dry clean cloth used for polishing

Environment Cleaner for reprocessing area
Select product as per manual cleaning solution
After cleaning ensure cleaner is rinsed off thoroughly and dry area with disposable low-lint cloth

Drying Agents (Rinse Aids)
Drying agents are used in washer/disinfectors and are surfactants that “wet” the final rinse water, allowing the water to spread evenly over a surface instead of beading. The even spread of water allows flash drying to take place, reducing the build-up of hard water salts on the surface of the instrument, whereas beaded water will dry, leaving concentration of mineral salts. Most drying agents are not as effective on plastics as they are on metal objects. Load instruments and metals on top racks with plastics on the bottom rack. Place items that may have “lips” on their edge so that water does not pool.

Handling and Storage of Chemicals
As per manufacturers instructions and Safety Data Sheets and in accordance with CHEM Alert and the facilities Workplace Health and Safety instructions.

Reference: AS/NZS 4815; NHMRC Australian Guidelines For The Prevention And Control Of Infection In Healthcare 2010; ADA Guidelines infection control 2012
## 1.5 PRE CLEANING

### PURPOSE

Pre cleaning (initial cleaning) allows for the removal of visible blood, body fluids and debris from items prior to cleaning (definitive cleaning). Pre cleaning shall be undertaken as soon as possible (e.g. during and post procedure chair-side). If blood, proteins and other debris are allowed to dry or remain in crevices and joints, the instruments become very difficult to clean and are prone to stiffness and accelerated corrosion.

Refer to SOP 1.6 Manual Cleaning for Immersible Items. For those items that are unable to be cleaned using a washer disinfector or ultrasonic cleaner
Refer to SOP 1.7 Manual Cleaning for Non-Immersible Items. For those items that are unable to be submerged under water
Refer to SOP 1.8 Ultrasonic Cleaners

### OPERATING PROCEDURE

- Application of standard precautions
- Pre cleaning can be performed by methods such as dry wiping, damp wiping or use of a commercially available single use only instrument sponge
- Place the dry wipe, damp wipe or sponge on the bracket table and carefully wipe the instrument across the material.

Reference: AS/NZS 4815; NHMRC Australian Guidelines For The Prevention And Control Of Infection In Healthcare 2010; ADA Guidelines for infection control 2012
1.6 MANUAL CLEANING FOR IMMERSEABLE ITEMS.
For the those items that are able to be cleaned using a washer disinfect or ultrasonic cleaner

PURPOSE
To remove blood and debris from dental devices using nonabrasive methods to achieve the lowest possible bio burden (number of micro-organisms) on the items prior to sterilization or disinfection whilst preventing instrument damage. Where possible an ultrasonic machine or mechanical washer should be used to clean dental instruments.

Refer to SOP 1.1 Standard Precautions
Refer to SOP 1.8 Ultrasonic Cleaners
Refer to SOP 3.2 Loading and Recording of items for steam sterilization

CLEANING MATERIALS requirements
- Double sink or equivalent or single sink
- Water
- Soft instrument brushes various sizes
- Disposable low-lint cloth
- Suitable instrument detergent
- Pressure equipment
  - High pressure water
  - Air pressure
- Non abrasive pad
- Heavy duty gloves

MANAGEMENT OF CLEANING BRUSHES
- Use single use and non-abrasive cleaning brushes only and dispose at the end of the day.
- Reusable cleaning brushes (Refer to SOP 3.2).
- Reusable cleaning brushes shall be stored dry and visibly clean. (Refer to SOP 3.2).

SINK OPERATION

Single Sink Operation
The sink is to be cleaned with a detergent impregnated wipe between the first rinse of the instruments and the filling of the sink for cleaning the instruments.
Following cleaning of the instruments and before the final rinse the sink only needs to be cleaned with a detergent impregnated wipe if the cleaning water is discoloured or cloudy.

Double Sink Operation
The first sink is to be always used for the initial rinse of instruments only and does not need to be cleaned between use.
The second sink is to be used for the cleaning and the final rinse of instruments and only needs to be cleaned between these two activities if the instrument cleaning water is discoloured or cloudy.

NB all sinks must be cleaned at the end of the day.
1.6 MANUAL CLEANING FOR IMMERSIBLE ITEMS.
For the those items that are able to be cleaned using a washer disinfector or ultrasonic cleaner

GENERAL OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR IMMERSIBLE ITEMS
- Application of standard precautions (Refer to SOP 1.1)
- Identify instruments that requires manual cleaning
- Disassemble and open items, inspect for damage or parts missing, report to the Senior Dental Assistant
- If an instrument is missing notify the Senior Dental Assistant and contact user area
- Initial Rinse - rinse instruments under warm running water
- Fill sink to the recommended concentration of instrument detergent to warm water.
- Cleaning instruments- when cleaning instruments limit the generation of aerosols by holding the item low in the sink below water line, apply adequate friction, taking care to protect against sharps injury and prevent damage to the instrument
- For immersible cannulated instruments, the item has to be flushed, brushed and flushed until clean
- Final rinse - rinse the item thoroughly under warm running water and check that the item is clean. Note if a demineralised/reverse osmosis water system is installed, rinse with demineralised/ reverse osmosis filtered water
- If an instrument is damaged; clean, dry and sterilize the instrument prior to sending it for repair unless contradicted by manufacturer instructions

DRYING - As per the manufacturer's instructions
- Drying cabinet
- Disposable low-lint cloth
- Air pressure gun - to be regulated to a low pressure
- Disposable syringe

PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH INCORRECT DRYING
- Wet packaging results in unsterile item
- Can cause rusting, corrosion, pitting to the item
- May compromise steam sterilization
- Increase risk of recontamination during inspection and reassembly

Reference: AS/NZS 4815; NHMRC Australian Guidelines For The Prevention And Control Of Infection In Healthcare 2010; ADA Guidelines for infection control 2012
1.7 MANUAL CLEANING FOR NON-IMMERSIBLE ITEMS

For those items that are unable to be submerged under water

PURPOSE
To remove blood and debris from dental devices using nonabrasive methods to achieve the lowest possible bio burden (number of micro-organisms) on the items prior to sterilization or disinfection whilst preventing instrument damage.

Refer to SOP 1.1 Standard Precautions
Refer to SOP 1.6 Manual Cleaning for Immersible Items
Refer to SOP 3.2 Loading and Recording of items for steam sterilization

CLEANING MATERIALS Requirements
- Double sink or equivalent or single
- Water
- Soft instrument brushes various sizes
- Disposable low-lint cloth
- Suitable instrument detergent
- Pressure equipment
  - High pressure water
  - Air pressure
- Non-abrasive pad
- Heavy duty gloves

MANAGEMENT OF CLEANING BRUSHES
- Use single use and non-abrasive cleaning brushes only and dispose at the end of the day.
- Reusable cleaning brushes (Refer to SOP 3.2).
- Reusable cleaning brushes shall be stored dry and visibly clean (Refer to SOP 3.2)

OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR NON-IMMERSIBLE ITEMS
- Application of standard precautions (Refer to SOP 1.1)
- Check and follow the instrument manufacturers instructions e.g. handpieces
- Gently rinse with warm water to remove gross soil as per manufacturers instructions. This may require using a low lint cloth immersed in water if the item cannot be placed under gently running water
- Fill the sink to the recommended level with warm water and a suitable detergent (Refer to SOP 1.6)
- These items are wiped using a disposable low lint clean cloth and/or cleaned used with a soft instrument brush that has been immersed in the clean, warm water with detergent added
- The cloth is wrung out/damp only to prevent water entering the instrument. This may require use of a low-lint cloth immersed in water & then wrung out
- The dampened cloth is rubbed over the item. These steps may need to be repeated until the item is visually cleaned
- Following cleaning with detergent and the instrument is free of visible contamination; the detergent must also be removed
- Using a damp clean low lint cloth (that has not been in contact with detergent), wipe over the item to remove the detergent. Note if a demineralised/reverse osmosis water system is installed, rinse with demineralised/reverse osmosis filtered water
- Non-immersible cannulated/lumen items - the manufacturers instructions must be adhered to in relation to flushing e.g. automated handpiece lubrication device

DRYING – As per the manufacturers instructions
- Drying cabinet
- Disposable low-lint cloth
- Air pressure gun - to be regulated to a low pressure
- Disposable syringe

PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH INCORRECT DRYING
- Wet packaging results in unsterile items
- Can cause rusting, corrosion, pitting to the items
- May compromise steam sterilization
- Increase risk of recontamination during inspection and reassembly

Reference: AS/NZS 4815; NHMRC Australian Guidelines For The Prevention And Control Of Infection In Healthcare 2010; ADA Guidelines for infection control 2012
1.8 ULTRASONIC CLEANER

PURPOSE
Ultrasonic cleaning is a form of mechanical cleaning that uses high frequency ultrasonic waves (cavitation) that dislodges fine particles from the surfaces of instruments.

Refer to SOP 1.6 Manual Cleaning for Immersible Items - for those items that are unable to be cleaned using a washer disinfector or ultrasonic cleaner
Refer to SOP 5.3 Ultrasonic Machine Testing - Daily
Refer to SOP 5.9 Routine Cleaning Reprocessing Equipment

Safety
- Do not submerge any part of body into the tank whilst in operation as this may contribute to arthritic conditions
- Do not operate with lid open as aerosols may be created and high frequency sound waves may cause inner ear damage
- Ensure hands are dry prior to turning power on or off
- Check switches and leads are in good condition, report any damage to Senior Dental Assistant
- Check material suitability (not all materials can be processed in this machine e.g. plastic and glass also check with instrument manufacturers instructions
- Overloading of baskets can result in operator injury by causing strain on the body when loading and removing internal basket
- Overloading can also cause damage to the item and results in the ultrasonic waves not being able to penetrate into areas required

OPERATING PROCEDURE
- Application of standard precautions

Filling the Machine
- Follow the manufacturers instructions
- Fill the tank with water to fill line indicator as per manufacturers instructions
- Add the specified amount of instrument detergent (neutral or slightly alkaline detergent - see ultrasonic manufacturer specifications)
- With dry hands, plug lead from the machine into a power point and turn on the power
- Degas the machine by closing the lid and turn the switch on for the timeframe specified by the manufacturer. Degassing must occur each time the solution is changed
- Perform a ceramic disk test or similar and record results (Refer to SOP 5.3)

Operating the Machine
- Follow the manufacturers instructions
- Place designated ultrasonic basket in rinse sink
- Place instruments in ultrasonic basket as per manufacturers loading requirements. Do not overload the basket
- Disassemble and open items to be processed
- Place delicate or small pieces of items into lock down baskets
- Rinse all items with warm water to remove gross soil
- Once drained, place basket into ultrasonic machine
- The basket is then lowered into the ultrasonic tank and is fully submerged
- Do not place items directly on the floor of the ultrasonic. This will damage the transducers
- Fully close lid and operate for recommended time
- If a stand-alone model: remove items by using designated lifters at completion of cycle
- For bench top models: remove items by lifting the instrument basket
- Thoroughly rinse instruments with warm running water (Refer SOP 1.6)
- Take care when removing instruments from the basket to prevent injury and instrument damage
- Dry items (Refer to SOP 1.6)

Emptying and Cleaning the Machine
- Daily and if solution becomes murky or discoloured
- Routine cleaning of the ultrasonic machine is required. (Refer to SOP 5.9)

Reference: AS/NZS 4815; NHMRC Australian Guidelines For The Prevention And Control Of Infection In Healthcare 2010; ADA Guidelines for infection control 2012
1.9 WASHER DISINFECTORS

PURPOSE
Automated washer disinfector machines clean and remove bio burden/micro-organisms (blood and debris) that adhere to contaminated items. The use of washer disinfector machines reduces the manual handling of contaminated items and is the preferred and verifiable process. Various types and sizes are available and must be equipped with a cycle record. Thermal disinfection is the inactivation of non-sporing organisms using heat and water. This occurs during the final rinse stage where time at temperature is achieved.

OPERATING PROCEDURE
- Application of standard precautions
- Refer to SOP 5.4 Mechanical Washer Cycle Monitoring
- Follow the manufacturers instructions for cleaning, maintenance and correct operation. Refer to SOP 5.9 Routine Cleaning of Reprocessing Equipment

Loading
- Choose the specific washer insert that is required e.g. dental handpieces and follow manufacturers instructions (not all Dental Handpieces are recommended to be cleaned through a Washer Disinfector)
- Check that instruments/equipment have been disassembled, unlocked, opened (e.g. forceps, needle holders, scissors)
- Disks or tags may be used to identify instrument trays when they are placed into multiple baskets for cleaning
- Instrument trays sets are not to be loaded beyond the operators capacity to lift comfortably. Operators should also consider capacity of others that may be required to lift the load.
- Ensure all instrument trays and parts of disassembled instruments are correct and together and placed into specific basket as per process validated at commissioning
- Load the baskets/racks ensuring they are not overcrowded or over opened so that water and chemical contact will reach all internal and external surfaces
- Small/light items to be placed in the appropriate lidded basket with hold down catch to ensure they do not become loose in the machine during operation
- Use a hold down screen as the pressure of water inside the machine can dislodge items
- Hollowware is loaded in a draining position to prevent retention of water, cleaning solution and ability to dry
- Minimise lifting of racks
- Make sure equipment stays in the perimeter of the rack
- Select the appropriate cycle for the load

Lumen Instruments
- If the machine has the capability of cleaning cannulated/lumened instruments and handpieces, attach the instrument to the appropriate size port

Washer Disinfector Cycles
- A variety of cycles are available
- Ensure correct cycle for your load is selected
- If Barcode system is available - make sure barcode or electronic eye is inserted on the side of the rack and the code corresponds with the material to be loaded allowing cycle parameters to be met for that material
1.9 WASHER DISINFECTORS

Releasing the Load and Unloading the Washer Disinfector
- Check cycle parameters have been met and print out/log (or equivalent) is signed
- Care is taken when opening the doors and unloading as there may be residual heat and moisture in the machine
- Inspect load to ensure that items have not become dislodged or displaced
- When unloading baskets avoid conditions that may damage the equipment/instruments and that may injure staff
- Perform a preliminary check for cleanliness of items and any that appear dirty or stained are returned to the cleaning area for recleaning/destaining
- If the machine does not have the ability to dry the load, unload items and place into drying cabinet
- Industrial dry and oil free compressed air should be used to remove excess moisture from cannulated/lumen instruments prior to placing in drying cabinet
- When dry, place instruments onto designated work benches to await packing/wrapping

Workplace Health and Safety Considerations
- Equipment will be hot, wear/use operator hand protection eg. Heat/sharp resistant gloves
- Do not lift heavy washer disinfector baskets, washer disinfector carts shall be available for use
- Observe for pooling of hot water in bowls or trays
- Use manual handling principals to minimise injury
- Wear ear protection if using air pressure gun

Report Immediately
- Cycle parameters not meeting set requirements or variations to cycle parameters – failed cycles
- Items that appear dirty or stained
- Excess water – check the following: the machine temperature, amount of rinse aid going into the machine or the way in which the machine was loaded
- Damaged instruments

Reference: AS/NZS 4815; NHMRC Australian Guidelines For The Prevention And Control Of Infection In Healthcare 2010; ADA Guidelines for infection control 2012
1.10 DE-STAINING

PURPOSE
To remove stains that can contribute to corrosion, pitting or other damage to dental devices during the inspection of instruments. Instruments that are heated during procedures i.e. endodontics, are prone to developing carbon deposits and should be de-stained as necessary.

OPERATING PROCEDURE
Ensure the de-staining solution is compatible with the dental device. Usually only used on stainless steel instruments unless otherwise indicated by the manufacturer.

- Application of standard precautions
- Wear protective clothing including heavy duty gloves compatible with the de-staining chemical
- Use a container with a good fitting lid
- Strictly follow manufacturer’s instructions on water / chemical ratio
- Dissimilar instruments should not be processed at the same time
- Follow the manufacturers recommendations for exposure of the item to the de-staining chemical
- Instruments heated during procedures (i.e. endodontic treatment) may require de-staining periodically.
- Do not exceed recommended time of exposure to the chemical
- Remove items from chemical mixture using appropriate type gloves suitable for the chemical to lower the risk of injury e.g. acid bath and enzymatic cleaners
- After exposure the item is required to be re-washed to remove chemical residue
- Only mix de-staining solution when required and dispose of according to manufacturers instructions after use
- Remove gloves and wash hands
- Identify and report any patterns of staining occurrence to enable investigation of possible causes

Occupational Health & Safety
- Acid based de-staining chemicals are a strong acid and can cause burns to hands, eyes etc.
- Read and know manufacturers instructions and precautions.
- Refer to Material Safety Data Sheet for first aid instructions

Reference: Reference: AS/NZS 4815
1.11 DRYING CABINET

PURPOSE
To dry the cleaned item prior to wrapping and packaging and prevent damage that occurs to the item if it is left wet.

OPERATING PROCEDURE
Refer to SOP 5.9 Routine Cleaning of Reprocessing Equipment

PRIOR TO LOADING
- Application of standard precautions
- Assess the material that can go into the dryer as per manufacturer instructions
- Lumen instruments should be blown with industrial dry and oil free compressed air or if not available a disposable syringe prior to placing in dryer

LOADING
- Do not overload drying baskets
- When loading new items for dry where items are already in dryer, place existing items on upper shelves, new items on lower shelves to eliminate drips onto dry items.

UNLOADING
- Cabinet temperature operates within a range according to manufacturer’s instructions and a visual check to confirm temperature range prior to unloading is undertaken
- Drying times should not exceed 1 hour
- Heat resistant/sharp resistant gloves should be worn to unload items
- Remove items on a regular basis
- Avoid leaving items in the dryer too long
- Assess items are dry before removing
- If the dryer temperature is not within the manufacturers specifications report immediately to the Senior Dental Assistant
- Care must be taken when trying to retrieve an instrument from a tray of instruments as a sharps injury could occur (ensure you can see what you are retrieving) and items may be hot.

Workplace Health and Safety Considerations
- Items may be hot and sharp, use appropriate personal protective equipment
- Wear ear protection if using air pressure gun
- Use manual handling principle to minimise injury

Calibration and annual thermocouple temperature check for drying cabinets refer to AS/NZS4815:2006 Table 7.3

Reference: AS/NZS 4815