4.1 DEDICATED AREA FOR STERILE GOODS

PURPOSE
Sterile stock produced by the health care facility or commercially supplied is stored in an environment that is kept dry, free of dust, insects and vermin, maintains the integrity of the sterile stock and prevents contamination.

Refer to SOP 1.1 Standard Precautions
Refer to SOP 4.2 Stock rotation

OPERATING PROCEDURE
Environmental considerations for Event Related Sterility are listed below Only those sites that can ensure environmental control (temperature and humidity) and meet sterile stock storage requirements of AS/NZS 4815 can move to event related sterility. If these storage requirements can not be met the unused items must be reprocessed after 3 months.

Environment Controls
- Temperatures in this area are in the range 18°C - 22°C with a relative humidity ranging from 35% - 68%
- The area is to be secure from public access
- Limited staff thoroughfare/working in this area to minimise movement of airborne contamination
- Sterile goods shall always be segregated from non-sterile goods
- This area is required to be protected from direct sunlight
- For open shelving store items 250mm above floor level & at least 400mm from ceiling fixtures
- Surfaces such as walls, floors, ceilings and shelving shall be non-porous, smooth and easily cleaned
- Air-conditioning & ventilation conditions should be in accordance with AS1668.2
- New overhead lighting is fitted flush to the ceiling to minimise dust entrapment

Maintaining Integrity
- Staff remove contaminated PPE and perform hand hygiene prior to handling sterilized items in dedicated sterile stock areas
- Staff with discharging or open wounds, abrasions or scaling skin disorders shall not handle sterile stock.
- Dust is removed from the store pack/transportation packing of sterile items received from commercial or external suppliers. Items are to be removed from the store pack/transportation packing prior to being brought into the clean area
- The sterile storage area is cleaned in accordance with the facilities cleaning guidelines, to prevent contamination by cleaning process, cleaning products, dust, insects and vermin
- Keep storage containers clean, dry and in good condition
- Cardboard boxes are not used as storage containers as they are porous and cannot be adequately cleaned
- Plastic dust covers can be used to protect sterilized articles from contamination by dust and other contaminants during storage and transport and should be labelled “Dust Cover Only”
- Space is allocated to house the number required to ensure overstocking is not an issue
- The items integrity and chemical indicator colour change is checked during placement into designated storage area

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

PURPOSE
The purpose of stock rotation is to use sterile stock according to the date of manufacture.

OPERATING PROCEDURE ☑
- When storing sterile stock ensure the oldest manufactured date is at the front/top so that it is used first
- Do not overstock, cram, or squash sterilized stock into containers/drawers/shelves as this may compromise the integrity of the items
- If possible, use the principle of taking from the left & replacing to the right. If stored in containers take from the front & replace at the back
- Care shall be taken during stock rotation, as less handling will result in less damage
- Follow facility process for notification of stock shortages and/or re-ordering
- If it is identified that there are items that are very rarely requested, bring this to the attention of the Senior Dental Assistant
- If numbers of stock are inadequate, bring it to the attention of the Senior Dental Assistant
- Do not take it upon yourself to change the stock numbers, as numbers are determined through Management
- Sterile items are not to be:
  - Handled with hands that are wet, or have not been washed and dried
  - Handled with moisturised hands
  - Roughly handled
  - Handled excessively
  - Packed in a manner that could damage the wrapping material
  - Bundled using rubber bands or similar
  - Placed on or near surfaces that have the potential to be wet
  - Exposed to aerosolising procedures

Reference: AS/NZS 4815; NHMRC Australian Guidelines For The Prevention And Control Of Infection In Healthcare 2010; ADA Guidelines for infection control 2012
4.3 DELIVERY OF STERILE STOCK

PURPOSE
To facilitate safe and secure transportation of sterile stock to user areas

OPERATING PROCEDURE
- Dedicated trolleys/containers should be covered and closed with a solid bottom shelf
- Dedicated transport containers shall have lids that can be secured and be able to withstand cleaning
- When transporting sterile stock from area to area within a health care facility; trolleys must be enclosed or be covered with a clean cover
- If a trolley or container is used to transport both sterile and clean items the clean items are to be segregated from the sterile items
- Heavy items are not placed on top of light items when loading the trolley/container.
- Baskets shall be used to store small packages on delivery as this will stop them from falling off the trolley
- Staff responsible for the dispatch of the sterile items shall perform a quality check prior to the item being delivered to the correct area to ensure – correct labelling, batch labelled, undamaged, correct chemical indicator change and within expiry date
- Attach checklist of contents to the trolley/containers
- Do not overstock trolleys to avoid or cause damage to the goods
- Delivery trolley/container shall be easy to clean after each use
- Sterile items intended for distribution outside the health care facility shall be securely packed and protected against damage and contamination during transportation
- Report damage of trolley/container to the supervisor

Reference: AS/NZS 4815