

Interim Guidance

**Roles and Responsibilities of  
NHSScotland Decontamination  
Engineering Staff  
in the Acute Sector  
Guidance – GUID 5015**

## Purpose/Scope

This interim guidance (pending publication of Scottish Health Technical Memorandum SHTM 01-01) is intended to detail requirements on engineering roles to address health and safety matters concerning decontamination of reusable medical devices in the acute sector.

It supersedes the defined roles and responsibilities in Scottish Health Technical Memorandum (SHTM) 2010 and SHTM 2030 published in 2001. The new Authorised Person (Decontamination) AP(D) role is critical to the management of the safety of decontamination equipment within the Boards. Formalising this role will enable the relevant members of staff to receive appropriate training. The generic Authorised Person role was identified in SHTM 00 Best Practice Guidance for Healthcare Engineering – Policies and Principles published by HFS in 2013.

## Principles

- staff undertaking decontamination and management of decontamination should be able to demonstrate their preset competencies and training in the areas in accordance with their roles and responsibility;
- the roles and responsibilities of Decontamination Engineering staff should be clearly defined and documented;
- Decontamination Engineering staff should undertake decontamination activities which demonstrate their competency e.g. decontamination training courses as part of their professional development plan;
- a governance structure should be in place for the Decontamination Engineering staff roles which supports the reporting and escalation of any failures to comply with this guidance document.

## Authorising Engineer (Decontamination) (AE(D))

The AE(D) is defined as a person designated by HFS to advise on decontamination procedures, washer-disinfectors, sterilizers and associated sterilization procedures. The AE(D) is also responsible for reviewing and witnessing local health board documentation on validation.

The AE(D) is required to liaise closely with other professionals in various disciplines and, consequently, the appointment should be made known in writing to all interested parties.

The AE(D) should report to the Decontamination Lead and should provide professional and technical advice to the AP(D)s, CP(D)s, Users and other key personnel involved in the control of decontamination processes within NHSScotland healthcare facilities.

The principal responsibilities of the AE(D) are as follows:

- to provide to decontamination management and operational decontamination staff with general and impartial advice on all matters concerned with decontamination and on programmes of validation and testing;
- to audit reports on validation, revalidation and yearly tests submitted by the AP(D);
- to advise decontamination management and operational decontamination staff on programmes of periodic tests and periodic maintenance;
- to advise decontamination management and operational decontamination staff on operational procedures for routine production;
- to advise decontamination management on the appointment of the AP(D) and provide technical advice on purchasing and selection of equipment.

### Authorised Person (Decontamination) (AP(D))

The AP(D) should have technical knowledge and be appointed by the health board Executive manager in conjunction with the advice provided by the AE(D)). The AP(D) is responsible for the practical implementation and operation of procedures relating to the engineering aspects of decontamination equipment including the operation of the permit to-work system.

The AP(D) should be able to undertake their role in a safe and effective manner.

The role of AP(D) is intended to provide the organisation with an individual who, as part of the local board management infrastructure, will provide day-to-day operational management responsibility for the safety of the system. This should be an internal appointment from within the organisation.

The role of the AP(D) can vary between health boards and is determined by the amount of decontamination equipment the individual will be responsible for. For example;

- in some organisations there are so few items of decontamination equipment in use that a service provided by a third party may be adequate;
- in some organisations there is not enough decontamination equipment to warrant a full time AP(D). Here the role of the AP(D) would be one of a number of areas of similar responsibility for the individual(s) concerned. However, any additional responsibilities should not reduce the importance of the role nor impair the ability of the AP(D) to carry out his/her duties effectively;
- larger organisations may be able to warrant the appointment of an AP(D) dedicated full-time to the role;
- some organisations may wish to consider the appointment of more than one AP(D) to ensure that appropriate cover is provided. In these circumstances the organisation should appoint a senior AP(D). Even where estates roles are contracted out, it is recommended that the AP(D) function remains the responsibility of the healthcare organisation.

In most organisations the role of AP(D) would only be one of a number of areas of similar responsibility for the individual(s) concerned. However, any additional responsibilities should not reduce the importance of the role nor impair the ability of the AP(D) to carry out his/her duties effectively. The AP(D) should report to the Designated Person.

The AP(D) will also be responsible for:

- the engineering management of reusable medical device decontamination equipment;
- line management and/or appointment of the CP(D);
- the safe and effective systems of work for all installed decontamination equipment within their area of responsibility;
- the acceptance criteria for operational and performance testing of all installed decontamination equipment;
- liaison with the AE(D), Decontamination Lead and other decontamination stakeholders;
- authorising the use of decontamination equipment after major repair or refurbishment and after quarterly or annual tests.

### Competent Person (Decontamination) (CP(D))

The CP(D) is defined as a person designated by the AP(D) to carry out maintenance, validation and periodic testing of washer-disinfectors, sterilizers and endoscope washer disinfectors.

The principal responsibilities of a CP(D) are:

- to carry out maintenance tasks;
- to carry out repair work;
- to conduct validation tests and periodic tests as specified in SHTMs and relevant European standards;
- to witness the installation checks and tests carried out by the contractor, including ensuring that the calibration of each test instrument provided by the contractor has been checked on site and is satisfactory, and should arrange for test loads to be supplied as required.

It is recommended that an individual CP (D) does not carry out all 3 quarterly tests & the (re)validation test on a particular piece of equipment in a calendar year.

### Competent Person (Pressure Systems) [CP(PS)]

The Competent Person is defined in the Pressure Systems Safety Regulations 2000 and is a chartered engineer responsible for drawing up a written scheme of examination for the system. E.g. porous load sterilizers.

Most insurance companies maintain a technical division able to advise on appointing a CP (PS).

Each NHSScotland Board should have a governance structure in place which supports the reporting and escalation of any failures to comply with this guidance document.