



The Healthcare Laundry Accreditation Council

Fact Sheet

What is the Healthcare Laundry Accreditation Council?

A non-profit organization formed for the purpose of inspecting and accrediting laundries processing healthcare textiles for hospitals, nursing homes, and other healthcare facilities. Its mission is to publish the highest standards for processing healthcare textiles and to inspect and accredit laundries that meet these high standards.

Many industry associations support the Council and are represented on its Board of Directors.

- American Reusable Textiles Association (ARTA)
- American Society for Healthcare Environmental Services (ASHES)
- Association for Linen Management (ALM)
- Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC)
- International Association for Healthcare Textile Management (IAHTM)
- Textile Rental Services Association (TRSA)

“HLAC Accredited Laundries are an elite group having proved they have ‘the right stuff’ to serve you.”

Why Do Laundries Seek Accreditation?

When HLAC accredits a laundry, it warrants that the organization has successfully passed an inspection of its facility, policies and procedures, training programs, and its relationship with its customers. It is their commitment to help improve the healthcare laundry industry by actively participating in the process and opening its doors to an independent inspection.

What Do the Standards Cover?

The *Accreditation Standards for Processing Reusable Textiles for Use in Healthcare Facilities* cover the complete textile processing cycle, from handling and transporting soiled healthcare textiles, to in-plant processing and delivery back to the customer. The Standards also cover many basic considerations such as facility layout, personnel training, and customer service. Special attention is directed to OSHA-required practices, including Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Control Standards. The *Standards* can be downloaded from www.hlacnet.org.

How Does HLAC Benefit You?

An HLAC-accredited laundry has proven itself as a premier company to partner with. The preparation a laundry must go through is rigorous and extensive. The project involves employees at all levels of the organization and requires a time commitment to ensure they are ready on inspection day. Passing the inspection shows you that the laundry is running at a high level of operational efficiency, employees are well trained and productive, and most importantly—you and your customers can enjoy a consistent, smooth flow of hygienically clean textiles.

More HLAC Facts

- Accreditation is good for three years. After three years, a laundry must be re-inspected to remain accredited by HLAC.
- HLAC accreditation is a voluntary process.
- No other neutral organization exists for the purpose of inspecting healthcare laundries.
- The inspection process takes a full day and includes a review of written documents, a walk-through and visual inspection of the facility, employee and management interviews and more.
- Board Members serve voluntarily.

Did You Know?

TRSA estimates that over 10 billion pounds of healthcare-setting textiles are processed each year.





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Are Your Textiles Being Processed By An HLAC-Accredited Laundry?

If not, you may want to learn more about HLAC and its processes.

Clean v. Soil

The HLAC Standards focus on a number of aspects of the laundry with the ultimate goal of protecting clean textiles from soiled textiles at all times during processing. This protection is a vital component of the accreditation.

Our inspector carefully watches the entire path textiles follow throughout the laundry, from the moment they arrive to the moment they are packed and placed onto the truck for delivery to you.

And this involves more than just watching conveyors and carts. The inspector visually looks from the floor to the ceiling and everywhere in between to view where and how soiled and clean textiles are moving throughout the building to ensure they never cross paths.

Written policies and procedures are thoroughly reviewed. HLAC Standards require a laundry to have written policies and procedures to help ensure this "functional separation" is constantly in place and practiced every day.

The HLAC Standards have raised the bar to its highest level ever in this industry. Those who seek accreditation and invest their time and resources to achieve this prestigious standing are truly an elite group who deserve your business.

Don't wait, find out if your laundry is HLAC-accredited today! Visit www.hlacnet.org for a nationwide list of accredited laundries.

Hygienically Clean Textiles.

Laundries that use proper laundering techniques can assure their customers that the textiles are hygienically clean. Within our industry, there is no universally accepted definition of "hygienically clean." However, it usually means the textiles have been treated to a point where the biological contaminants (bioburden) have been removed and the item can be used without fear or risk of being a source of contamination in a healthcare use. AAMI (Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation) defines the term "hygienically clean" as "free of pathogens in sufficient numbers to cause human illness."

In a laundry, the wash process utilizes several techniques to assure the bioburden is reduced or eliminated:

- a.) **Dilution:** Several water changes during the cleaning process physically remove and flush away bio-organisms. Mechanical action is also a factor to consider as bioburden is loosened from the fabric by proper mechanical action.
- b.) **Heat:** Washing at elevated temperatures (>160°F) deactivates most of the common bio-organisms; however studies also show microbial reductions can be achieved at temperatures as low as 72°F.
- c.) **pH:** High pH (>10.5) will "attack" or deactivate bio-organisms. In addition, large swings in pH, from neutral (7.0 - 8.0) in first flushes, to alkaline (10.5 - 11.5) during the main wash cycles, to acidic (5.5 - 6.5) in the final rinse, will adversely affect bio-organisms.
- d.) **Oxidation:** Chlorine bleach or oxygen bleaches contribute to bio-organism deactivation. Chlorine bleaches are well known to have excellent anti-bacterial and anti-viral efficacy. Oxygen bleach is considered to be somewhat less aggressive on bacteria and viruses, however, when combined with the other cleaning factors in a laundry formula, oxygen bleach is considered effective in deactivating residual microbes.
- e.) **Chemical Sanitizers or Bacteriostats:** Some laundries as an extra precaution will use EPA registered products that will act as sanitizers in the final step of the laundry process.
- f.) **Drying/Ironing:** Drying or ironing at temperatures that exceed 180°F on the fabric surface deactivate any potential remaining organisms.

The CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) indicates that a well designed wash formula that appropriately uses the above techniques will provide "hygienically clean" textiles.