

A solid green horizontal bar.

THE IMPACT OF BLOCKAGES



Blockages aren't nice. Blockages – whether it's at home, on your way to work or in a clinical setting – cause a lot of problems.

If a sewage pipe ruptures on a main road it's a disaster for commuters, a money pit for the local council and a miserable experience for local residents.

If a bedpan washer or a pulp macerator blocks it can be an entirely more unpleasant and hazardous affair.

We're under no illusions, all technology can suffer break downs. Components can fail for a multitude of reasons and poor maintenance will guarantee worn or faulty components will go unnoticed until it's too late.

A blockage of a bedpan washer or pulp macerator, whilst not as expensive as a ruptured sewer pipe, presents just as serious a problem.

Aside from the inconvenience of having a machine out of commission, there is an issue of contamination.

Your sluice/dirty utility room is compromised as cleaning the area around the defective unit isn't sufficient to prevent the spread of infectious disease.

Clinicians need to observe enhanced infection control procedures as does the engineer coming into fix it.

Once the machine is fixed and the room sterilised its business as usual.

But what do you do in the meantime and how do you prevent it from happening again?

Black box thinking tells us that whenever there is any kind of mechanical or procedural failure, the best approach is to determine the cause and take steps to prevent it from happening again.

Little wonder that this methodology stems from the aerospace industry where failures cost lives.

The important thing to understand is that failures involving infection control cost lives too, not on the same scale admittedly, but that's hardly the point.

Identifying what caused the blockage helps to prevent a blockage from occurring again. Component failure can be resolved with regular maintenance.

Blockages in the pipe could be from over filling/misuse, the incorrect sized soil pipe or an unidentified design flaw.

In the event of human error, all you can do is educate and hope it doesn't happen again. If that human error is compounded by a fundamental design flaw then you and your clinicians are in for a very unpleasant time.

A blocked machine that causes flooding in your sluice/dirty utility room poses a risk to any clinician who comes into that environment without the proper protection. Not to mention anyone in the room below.

Depending on the severity of the blockage and associated flooding, you could also be running the risk of introducing infectious material to the hospital on clothing or footwear.



However, what about the risk the build-up of bedpans from the blockage presents? Those bed pans need to be washed or disposed of.

Does your infection control policy have a contingency plan for migrating potentially hazardous waste from one sluice/dirty utility room to another? If it doesn't it probably should.

Without disposal, the risk to clinicians and patients increases over time and ferrying that material to other parts of the hospital can allow infections to migrate causing fresh outbreaks which have to be contained, putting those sluice/dirty utility rooms under strain.

It's easy to see how this can become a cascade failure at this point.

However, there's an impact we haven't yet considered: cost.

Blocked or faulty machines needed repairing and unless you have a service contract an emergency call out won't be cheap.

Then there's the cost of sterilising the sluice/dirty utility room, replacing soiled equipment and consumables and any renovation work to damaged walls and flooring.

Not forgetting the potential costs of claims made against the hospital resulting from Healthcare Associated Infections.

So next time your pulp macerator blocks, make sure you have considered the full impact of what that blockage means to both your facility and your budgets.

Investing in the right machinery, the right service level agreement and cleaning consumables from the offset can not only protect your clinicians and patients from a Healthcare Associated Infection but insulate your facility against unbudgeted costs and undue strain across wards and departments.

DDC Dolphin provides industry leading bedpan washer and pulp macerator solutions enhanced with patented anti-blockage system, antimicrobial coating and unique hands-free technology, all designed to keep your clinicians safe.

For more information about our product range speak to one of our product experts who can take you through the key benefits.

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