

A solid green horizontal bar.

**WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT
OF A CATASTROPHIC
BREAKDOWN**



Hospital macerators and washer disinfectors are an essential part of many infection control procedures. But what about when things go wrong? As an estimate, at least 400,000 people are killed by preventable medical errors every year. This number includes those who fall victim to HCAs, and a vast majority of these are a result of equipment failures.

Whether you use a [pulp macerator](#), [incontinence macerator](#) or [bedpan washer disinfectant](#), the idea of it suddenly breaking down is horrifying.

You can't ask the people in your care to stop producing waste, so the solution to the problem will need to come from you, the healthcare provider, as part of your duty of care.

Your patients should never be allowed to suffer as result of a management catastrophe, even if you couldn't prevent it. The safest option is to plan ahead and always have a backup procedure in place.

If your pulp or incontinence macerator breaks, you'll need to find an alternative way to dispose of these products.

Disposable bedpans, urinals, vomit bowls and incontinence pads can all be hazardous waste products. If you're suddenly unable to macerate them, you'll need to find a solution, fast.

Allowing these items to stack up while you await an engineer could put both your patients and staff in danger of infection, as well as being unpleasant for everyone. You simply can't consider it as an option.

Assuming you don't have ample stock of re-usable bedpans and a washer disinfectant (generally, most wards will have opted for one or the other), you'll need to find another way to dispose of your single-use waste.

Although not as sanitary as a macerator by any stretch, using 'tiger stripe' bags which are specifically designated for offensive waste can pose a short-term solution; but bear in mind that it will need to be collected by a medical disposal company.

When a bedpan washer disinfectant breaks, the situation could be even worse.

Or at the very least – significantly more unpleasant.

Your clinicians will be left with the somewhat repulsive task of cleaning bedpans by hand; a method which is not only disagreeable, but dangerous in regard to infection control.

Washing bedpans by hand puts staff at higher risk of coming into direct contact with hazardous waste, high pressure hoses can lead to aerosolisation of microbes contained in the waste which can then be inhaled by the healthcare professional, not to mention the almost inevitable splashback which could leave waste on skin or clothing.

Furthermore, a bedpan washer chamber needs to be heated to 80 degrees Celsius in order to kill or denature bacteria. It's not possible to achieve this with manual washing as it would scold the skin. Therefore, washing by hand only serves to spread living microbes around the utensil.

The only safe solution, therefore, is to use another bedpan washer located in another ward or sluice room, which wastes valuable clinician time.

Equipment breakdowns are never convenient, but they don't need to be catastrophic.

The best-case scenario is to prevent breakdowns happening in the first place.



Although some may regard it as an unwanted additional cost, investing in a [Planned Preventative Maintenance Contract](#) is a far more convenient option than simply hoping your machinery lasts forever.

Similarly, the costs involved in rectifying broken machinery, as well as managing damage control while you wait for it to be repaired, are likely to far exceed what you pay in a maintenance contract. [Check out our infographic which compares the costs.](#)

That's before you consider the hidden cost to stress levels and reputation, which could be even more devastating than the financial implications.

Sensibility dictates that taking out a maintenance contract, which will allow highly qualified engineers to regularly service your machinery and maximise its uptime, is the most responsible option.

DDC Dolphin's nationwide team of engineers can provide the assistance you need, without delay.

Using tracking technology to put your nearest engineer on the right course, you will receive rapid and expert help should your machinery experience a fault. Better yet, DDC Dolphin engineers are trained in the repair of all brands of sluice/dirty utility room equipment – including those which are discontinued.

In addition, full training can be provided to your clinicians, to help ensure that they use your machinery correctly and prevent breakdowns through unintentional misuse.

If you'd like to find out more about Service Maintenance and Training, [contact us today](#).

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