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WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A CLEAN AND DIRTY UTILITY ROOM



Hospitals contain a matrix of facilities which work together to meet a common goal – outstanding patient care.

From the complex to the apparently mundane, medical institutions must take a holistic approach to wellbeing. Whether the goal is recovery or comfort, patients need to be given the best possible chance to achieve this end. Exposure to difficulty which is caused by the facility itself is to be avoided at all cost.

For this reason, cohesion between differing facilities and caregivers is a must. Nobody wishes for their patient to leave the operating theatre and gain a new ailment courtesy of the conditions on the ward. Every factor of patient care, from advanced to auxiliary, must be carefully considered in tandem.

Clean and dirty utility rooms are an essential part of the overall care process, but they're rarely put on a pedestal.

They might not be glamorous, but they're a vital cog in the machine. Clean and dirty utility rooms might sound banal, but they serve a critical function in regard to infection control.

They cover the join at crucial points where infection can spread; when patients come into contact with medical supplies, and where used medical supplies must be disposed of, or cleaned.

Creating a clear workflow between stations (be it an examination room, ward or surgical suite), clean and dirty utility rooms prevents cross-contamination between areas where medical supplies are used. They ensure that utensils will be clean when they enter the point of care, and sanitary when they exit; a process which supports an effective infection control strategy.

A clean utility room is predominantly used for storage.

However, this isn't merely a cupboard where supplies are locked away and forgotten about.

Any item that will eventually come into contact with a patient must be stored correctly, to prevent it from becoming a health risk. Products kept in a clean utility room will generally be needed for bedside procedures, so it's vital that they're sterile and ready for use, as opposed to gathering dust or becoming contaminated by other utensils.

[Pulp products](#), such as disposable bedpans and urine bottles, are also commonly kept in a clean utility room, before being sent for patient use. Despite their 'dirty' purpose, these containers must be kept hygienic, both before the event and prior to [maceration](#).

So, as hospitals strive to be scrupulously clean, why would you want a 'dirty' utility room?

The truth of the matter is, a 'dirty' utility room [isn't actually so](#).

'Dirty' doesn't refer to visible mess. It simply means a patient has come into contact with the item, so it either needs to be made sanitary for the next use or disposed of completely.

When items from the clean utility room are sent to a patient, the dirty utility room (or sluice room) is where the used items end up, in order to be cleaned or disposed of. Generally, these will be containers which have been used to collect and hold human waste.

If waste items aren't managed correctly, adhering to thorough infection control guidelines, they can become a serious HCAI risk. So, this is where the reference to 'dirty' comes into



play – potentially, these utensils can harbour microbes which are extremely dangerous if allowed to spread.

The dirty utility room is specifically designed to *not* allow this to happen.

Machines contained within a dirty utility room (generally [macerators](#) and [bedpan washer disinfectors](#)) use advanced infection control technology, such as hands-free operation, anti-microbial coatings and auto-disinfect cycles to ensure that they remain as sanitary as possible. When teamed with a watertight infection control procedure by clinicians, the so-called 'dirty' utility room is revealed to actually be an exceptionally clean area.

A solid infection control strategy will consider the hygiene of both clean and dirty utility rooms, to ensure they run seamlessly alongside each other. For advice regarding the most efficient dirty utility room machinery, [contact us](#) today.

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