

INFECTION PREVENTION & CONTROL COMMUNICATION FORM

PULL CORDS AND CALL BELLS

PART 1: ISSUE & RECOMMENDATIONS

Issue:

- Call bells have been linked to transmission of microorganisms and outbreaks.
- Pull cords are not regularly changed between patients and can become easily contaminated.

Recommendations:

1. Use call bells systems, including the cord and pull cords which are smooth, sealed and cleanable. Preferred replacements include single piece molded call bells.
2. Replace all pull cords that are not smooth, sealed, and cleanable, with appropriate cords (*per* recommendation # 1) that can be easily cleaned and disinfected. Repair or replace sealed call bells if seal lifts.
3. Clean and disinfect call bells with facility approved disinfectant, including the cord and all pull cords between patients according to manufacturer directions.²

PART 2: BACKGROUND: DISCUSSION OF ISSUE, OPTIONS & ANALYSIS & REFERENCES

Discussion of Issue:

Microorganisms and contaminated material migrate under the button and contaminate the inside of push button call bells. Call bells have been directly implicated in hospital outbreaks. An investigation into one hospital outbreak found evidence of heavily contaminated fecal material inside of a disassembled call bell.

String cords cannot be physically cleaned between patients and may harbor organisms. Improper cleaning of the physical environment has been related to transmission of many types of pathogenic organisms, e.g. *C. difficile*.

Options and Analysis:

1. Consult Infection Prevention and Control during the development of specifications and prior to any product evaluation during the procurement process for all new equipment, including call bells and pull cords.
2. Use standard non-critical equipment evaluation principles when selecting call bells and pull cords.
3. Refer to Cleaning and Disinfection of Non-Critical Reusable Equipment/Items for Patients in Hospital Operational Directive in the WRHA Infection Prevention & Control Manual for additional information
http://www.wrha.mb.ca/extranet/ipc/files/manuals/acutecare/Cleaning_Non-Critical_Items.pdf

References:

1. Global consensus conference on infection prevention and control practice for *Clostridium difficile* associated disease (CDAD). International Infection Control Council.
http://www.ipac-canada.org/pdf/2008_C_DIFF_RECOMM.pdf.
2. Routine Practices and Additional Precautions: Preventing the Transmission of Infection in Health Care. (2012). <https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/docs/ipc/rpap.pdf>.
3. Patient call bells awaken Canada to threat of VRE.
<http://www.ahcmedia.com/articles/38256-patient-call-bells-awaken-canada-to-threat-of-vre>.

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