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SOP: Decontamination Processes

1. Purpose

- Ensure safe and effective decontamination of all instruments and equipment.
- Prevent cross-contamination and follow infection-control standards.

2. Scope

- Applies to all staff involved in handling, cleaning, and decontaminating equipment.
- Covers PPE use, area segregation, equipment maintenance, and testing.

3. Responsibilities

- Practice owner, IPC officer, and designated staff must enforce this SOP.
- SOP must be approved, signed, dated, and reviewed every 5 years or as needed.

4. Procedure

4.1 Use of PPE

- Wear gloves, gowns, masks, and face protection.
- Don PPE before entering decontamination area.
- Remove PPE safely after use.

4.2 Clean vs. Dirty Area Separation

- Maintain separate zones for contaminated and sterile instruments.
- Follow a one-direction workflow.
- Clearly label clean and dirty areas

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4.3 Manual Cleaning & Drying

- Use approved detergents and brushes.
- Remove all visible debris before sterilization.
- Rinse and dry instruments thoroughly.

4.4 Decontamination Process

- Follow standard cleaning and disinfection protocols.
- Use automated washers or ultrasonic cleaners where applicable.
- Validate cleaning cycles and keep records.

4.5 Equipment Maintenance & Testing

- Maintain and test autoclaves, washers, and ultrasonic cleaners regularly.
- Follow manufacturer instructions.
- Keep service, calibration, and testing records.

4.6 Sterile Packaging

- Packaged instruments in sterile wraps or containers.
- Ensure packaging is intact and suitable for the sterilization method.

4.7 In-Pack Chemical Indicators

- Place indicators inside all sets.
- Confirm color change to verify sterilization exposure.

4.8 Tracking Indicators

- Label all packs with batch numbers and sterilization dates.
- Maintain a tracking log for traceability.

4.9 Packing Standards

- Follow manufacturer guidelines and SANS ISO 11607 standards.
- Ensure packaging integrity after sterilization.

4.10 Sterilization Failure Investigation

- Report failures at once.
- Quarantine affected instruments.
- Find cause, correct the issue, and document actions.

4.11 Storage

- Store sterilized instruments in clean, dry, dust-free areas.
- Keep packaging intact until use.
- Rotate stock using FIFO (first-in, first-out)

5. Documentation

- Keep logs for cleaning, maintenance, sterilization cycles, and chemical indicators.
- Ensure records are available for audits.

6. Review & Approval

- SOP must be reviewed and approved by the designated authority.
- Update when procedures, equipment, or regulations change.

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