DEPARTMENT: INFECTION CONTROL **POLICY: IC-360**

SUBJECT: CLEANING, DISINFECTING, AND STERILIZATION

PURPOSE: To provide guidelines for cleaning (decontamination), disinfection, and sterilizing of items used in FMDH. FMDH uses AORN recommended practices for cleaning/disinfection/sterilization.

RESPONSIBILITY:

- Infection Control Practitioner
- Director of Surgical Services

DEFINITIONS:

1. **Cleaning/decontamination:** The removal of soil and microorganisms adhering to a surface of an object by the use of mechanical action, water, and a detergent.
2. **Disinfection**: The removal of pathogenic microorganisms from objects, rendering them safe to handle. Disinfection does not kill spores.
3. **High-level disinfection:** Is expected to destroy all microorganisms, with the exception of high numbers of bacterial spores.
4. **Intermediate-level disinfection:** Inactivates Mycobacterium tuberculosis, vegetative bacteria, most viruses, and most fungi but does not necessarily kill bacterial spores.
5. **Low-level disinfection:** Kills most bacteria, some viruses, and some fungi, but cannot be relied on to kill resistant microorganisms such as tubercle bacilli or bacterial spores.
6. **Sterilization:** The use of physical or chemical processes to destroy all microorganisms, including spores.

Spaulding classification system:

1. **Critical items:** Items which enter sterile tissue or the vascular system. (For example, surgical instruments, needles, urinary catheters)
2. **Semi-critical items:** Items that have been exposed to mucous membranes or skin that is not intact. (For example, respiratory equipment, anesthesia equipment, and ultrasound vaginal probe)
3. **Non-critical items:** Items that have been exposed to intact skin but not with mucous membranes. (For example, linens, beside tables, blood pressure cuffs, etc.)

POLICY:

1. Devices labeled for single-use should not be reprocessed unless the FDA guidelines for reprocessing of single-use devices can be met.
2. Items to be reprocessed should be categorized as critical, semi-critical, and noncritical.
3. Critical and semi-critical items: will be processed for reuse based on the intended use of the item, should be cleaned, decontaminated, inspected, packaged, sterilized, and stored in a controlled environment in accordance to AORN "Recommended practices for cleaning and care of surgical instruments and powered equipment" and the device manufacturer's validated and written instructions for use.
    a. High-level disinfection is required for semi-critical items such as endoscopes, endotracheal tubes, and respiratory therapy equipment.
    b. Intermediate-level disinfection is required for semi-critical items such as hydrotherapy tanks.
4. Non critical items will be cleaned/decontaminated using a hospital approved germicidal detergent.

REVIEW AND REVISION STATEMENT:

This policy will be reviewed and revised as necessary and at least annually by the Infection Control Practitioner, Physician Advisor, FNP, Director of Surgical Services, and CEO.
(original document date 10/1993)