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**Owner:** *Roshelle Satterthwait: Dir  
 Perioperative Svcs*  
**Policy Area:** *Sterile Processing*  
**References:**  
**Applicability:** *WA - Kadlec Regional Medical  
 Center*

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**SUPERSEDES:** 3/10, 4/07, 02/19/07, 12/03, 8/03, 10/25, 3/99, 5/95, 9/94

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this Policy is to provide criteria and guidelines for sterile packaging and storage in the use of hospital and/or manufactured sterile items which are enclosed in a plastic/paper peel pouch, non-woven sterilization wrap, and instrument containers. In regard to items labeled "Single Use" or "Disposable" refer to "Re-Use Policy 32.1.03"

**POLICY:**

The expiration of an item is defined in several ways:

A. Manufacturer's Instructions for Use dictates whether or not a product has a shelf life (i.e. wraps, peel packs, filters, etc.)

A. The expire date for commercially prepared items will be as indicated on the package by the company, unless the integrity of the packaged material has been compromised.

B. The integrity of the product must still be intact (i.e. tears, opened, wet, improper packaging technique, etc.)

C. Improper storage or handling would render it unsterilized (i.e. humidity or temperature issues, hazardous area exposure, etc.)

A. Any sterile item that is being removed or transported out of the sterile storage areas must be in proper packaging (i.e. dust cover, closed container, closed cart, etc.)

D. Hospital sterilized items properly wrapped and processed will be considered sterile and safe for patient use as long as the package integrity is not compromised.

E. All items will include a sterilization indicator/integrator both internally and externally. If the external indicator's integrity is no longer intact, the item should be considered unsterilized.

## REFERENCES:

"Recommended practices for Packaging Systems," in *Perioperative Standards and Recommended Practices For Inpatient and Ambulatory Settings* (Denver:AORN, Inc, 2013)

"Recommended practices for Sterilization," in *Perioperative Standards and Recommended Practices for Inpatient and Ambulatory Settings*(Denver:AORN, Inc, 2013).

Retzlaff, K., Llewellyn, I. & Wiggy, Z. (2013). Recommended Practices for Packaging Systems, *Perioperative standards and Recommended Practices, 2013 Edition, Denver, Co: AORN.*

Retzlaff, K., Llewellyn, I. & Wiggy, Z. (2013). Recommended Practices for Sterilization, *Perioperative standards and Recommended Practices, 2013 Edition, Denver, Co: AORN.*

## Attachments

No Attachments

## Approval Signatures

Approver	Date
Kirk Harper: CNO	01/2020
Heather Shipman: Executive Assistant	01/2020
Roshelle Satterthwait: Dir Perioperative Svcs	12/2019

## Applicability

WA - Kadlec Regional Medical Center