

# Infection Control Assessment and Response (ICAR) Tool

## Module 11: Water Exposure

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## Objectives

- 🛡️ Provide a brief over view of the ICAR
- 🛡️ Describe Module 11- Part A and Part B
- 🛡️ Discuss areas most commonly identified as areas for improvements

## ICAR Tools at a Glance

- 🛡️ Used to systematically assess Infection Prevention & Control (IPC) policies and practices in healthcare facility types across the continuum of care and to help guide quality improvement activities.
- 🛡️ Intended for use in acute care, long-term care, and outpatient settings.
- 🛡️ Includes a series of 11 modules.
- 🛡️ Not intended for use in outpatient hemodialysis facilities. There is a separate ICAR designated solely for conducting assessments surrounding IPC practices in Hemodialysis Clinics.
- 🛡️ [Infection Control Assessment and Response \(ICAR\) Tool for General Infection Prevention and Control \(IPC\) Across Settings | HAIs | CDC](#)

## ICAR Module 11: Water Exposure at a Glance

- 🛡️ Facilitator Guided – includes definitions and explanations to assist the person/facility conducting the assessment.
- 🛡️ Text Boxes & Appendices include additional references to helpful tools and resource links on regulations, recommendations, and best practices surrounding water as an IPC topic to aid in addressing identified opportunities for improvements.
- 🛡️ Two Sections:
  - Part A - Qualitative "Interview" Section
  - Part B - Quantitative "Observation" Section



## Water Management Program

- Does your facility have a WMP to reduce the growth and transmission of Legionella and other waterborne pathogens (e.g., Pseudomonas, Acinetobacter, Burkholderia, Stenotrophomonas, nontuberculous mycobacteria, and fungi)?
- Has a facility water infection control risk assessment been performed to identify potential issues arising from water exposures, e.g., CDC's WICRA?

## Water-associated Pathogens

- Does the facility have a surveillance process to detect healthcare-associated infections attributable to water-associated pathogens?
- If yes, what water-associated pathogens are routinely included in surveillance plans?
- Does clinical testing of patients/residents for Legionella include a paired lower respiratory culture and urinary antigen test?

## Measures to Reduce Risk from Water

- 🛡️ What strategies to prevent contamination of the patient care supplies due to splashing are practiced?
- 🛡️ Does the facility take any measures to reduce the development of biofilms in sink drains? If yes, what measures are taken?
- 🛡️ Does the facility have a policy that assigns responsibility for routine flushing of all eye wash stations to prevent stagnation of water in the systems?
- 🛡️ What are your preventative measures for ice machines, whirlpool tubs, birthing tubs, and communal showers?

## Decorative Water Features and Aquariums

- 🛡️ Are decorative water features located inside the facility?
- 🛡️ If yes, do written procedures include routine disinfection of water, residual disinfectant monitoring, visual monitoring of water clarity, and maintenance log of monitoring and cleaning/disinfection?
- 🛡️ Are fish tanks or aquariums located within the facility?
- 🛡️ If yes, do written protocols include routine cleaning schedules?

## Patient Care Activities Using Water

- 🛡️ Which of the following is a part of the policy and practice for usage of small-volume medication nebulizers?
  - Clean and disinfect nebulizer, with sterile water rinse, between treatments for same patient use
  - Nebulizers must go through the high-level disinfection (HLD) or sterilization process before being used on a subsequent patient
  - Only use sterile water to dissolve medications
  - Add medication to the nebulizer source in an aseptic manner
- 🛡️ Are reservoir-type humidifiers used in any locations of the healthcare facility?

## Vulnerable Populations

- 🛡️ Does the facility have protective environments (PE) or transplant units?
- 🛡️ If yes, are shower heads and tap aerators used in the PE or transplant unit disinfected monthly with a chlorine-based EPA-registered product or a chlorine bleach solution?

## Water Disruption

- 🛡️ Is there a protocol in place for addressing the infection prevention issues for planned water disruption?
- 🛡️ If yes, what elements are included in the protocol?
- 🛡️ Is there a protocol in place to respond to an unplanned water disruption?
- 🛡️ If yes, what elements are included in this protocol?

## Water Intrusion

- 🛡️ Does the facility have a plan to respond to internal (e.g., construction damage) disasters resulting in water intrusion?
- 🛡️ If yes, how are patients protected from risks due to water intrusion from internal sources?
- 🛡️ Does the facility have a plan to respond to external disasters (e.g., natural disaster, flooding) resulting in water intrusion?

# Module 11- Water Exposure Tool Part B

## Observations:

- 🛡️ Corresponding component to guide observations about water exposure risks.
- 🛡️ This portion of the tool is intended for the direct observation of water exposure practices.
- 🛡️ Ideally at least three patient care areas are observed.

# Module 11: Part B Observation Types

- 🛡️ Ice Machines/Ice Chests
- 🛡️ Medication Preparation area
- 🛡️ Soiled Utility Room
- 🛡️ Communal Shower Room
- 🛡️ Patient or Resident Rooms

**Part B. Water Exposure Observations:**

This portion of the tool is intended for the direct observation of water exposure practices, ideally at least three patient care areas are observed.

**Location/Unit 1:**

Ice machine     Ice chest room

- Is the ice dispenser area unlocked, clean, and free of signs of rodents or insects?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff
  - Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff

**Medication Preparation area**

- Are patient care supplies protected from splashing (e.g., via splashguards or distance)?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff
  - Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff
- When taps are running, do countertops and care supplies remain free from splashing?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff
  - Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff
- Are faucets off/on from drains?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff
  - Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff

**Soiled Utility Room**

- Do all happen bins have a cover that can be closed before flushing?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff
  - Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff
- Does the door to the soiled utility remain closed when happens are flushed?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff
  - Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff

**Communal Shower Room**

Communal showers are not used, skip to "Patient or Resident Rooms"

- Are shower floors constructed of non-porous materials?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff
  - Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff

**Patent or Resident Rooms**

- Are shower trolleys and mats stored in a manner that allows for drying of all surfaces?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff
  - Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff
- Do sinks have drains off-set from faucet stream?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff
  - Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff
- Are patient care supplies protected from splashing (e.g., via splashguards or distance)?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff
  - Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff
- Is toilet equipped with a lid?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff
  - Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff
- Is there any evidence of water intrusion in patient room, especially under patient sinks or around fold commodes?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff
  - Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff
- If a ventilator is in use: Are water traps on ventilator circuits below the level of the patient?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff
  - Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff
  - No ventilator in use
- If a ventilator is in use: Are circuits kept closed during disconnection?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Not observed but endorsed by frontline staff
  - Not observed and not endorsed by frontline staff
  - No ventilator in use

Fig 2 Module 11 DOR Tool Snapshot - Observations Section, Infection Control Assessment and Response (ICAR) Tool for General Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Across Settings, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), <https://www.cdc.gov/hai/rrc/tool/infection-control-assessment-tool.html>, Accessed: October 7, 2024.



## Commonly Identified Opportunities for Improvements

- 🛡️ Patient care supplies in splash zones
- 🛡️ Patient care rooms converted to office spaces
- 🛡️ Exterior faucets
- 🛡️ Decontamination showers in Emergency Department and Laboratory
- 🛡️ Toilet and hopper covers

## Resources - KDPH

- 🛡️ [Infection Control Assessment and Response \(ICAR\) Tool for General Infection Prevention and Control \(IPC\) Across Settings | HAIs | CDC](#)
- 🛡️ [ICAR Tool for General Infection and Control \(IPC\) Across Settings - Module 11: Water Exposure Facilitator Guide \(cdc.gov\)](#)
- 🛡️ [Overview of Water Management Programs | Control Legionella | CDC](#)
- 🛡️ [Toolkit: Developing a Legionella Water Management Program | Control Legionella | CDC](#)

# Thank you.

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