

## Container Maintenance Checklist

# RIGID CONTAINER PERFORMANCE MEASURES CHECKLIST



Proper maintenance of a containerized system requires many steps and strict adherence to use instructions, which can vary among manufacturers.

Over time, rigid containers become more likely to fail. Without consistent maintenance and repair, they can break down due to age, improper handling and mechanical stress.

As you consider ways to add value and efficiency to your sterilization program, consider the process required to ensure containers are working properly and are not at risk of failure.

### OPERATING ROOM CHECKLIST

- ✓ Prior to opening, the non-scrubbed person should inspect the container to ensure the tamper-evident arrow is not missing or broken in either of the two locks.
- ✓ Prior to opening, non-scrubbed person should inspect the container to ensure the indicator dot is not missing and the tamper-evident arrow is intact.
- ✓ Prior to opening, non-scrubbed person should inspect the container to ensure that the indicator dot shows a noticeable color change.
- ✓ The non-scrubbed personnel should break open the tamper proof seals, remove and discard them. The lid should be removed (per the manufacturer's instructions) carefully to ensure there is no contact between the lid and the inner rim, the sterile contents, or any part of the inside of the container system.



- ✓ The exterior of the lid of a container system is not sterile; if it comes into contact with the interior of the container system or its sterile contents, the contents could be contaminated.
- ✓ The items should be considered contaminated and returned for reprocessing if there is no internal chemical indicator found in the basket when opened or the internal indicator does not indicate the item has been processed when used according to the manufacturer's recommendations for use (if hospital protocol dictates that one should be present).
- ✓ After opening, the non-scrubbed person should inspect the lid for integrity of the filter or valve and gasket.
- ✓ After the scrubbed person removes the instrument tray from the container, the non-scrubbed person should check to be sure no filters are missing (on any of the perforated areas) and that they do not cover the raised edges (filter ridge) surrounding the perforated areas on the lid or bottom. The filter should also be inspected for wetness, tears, rips, punctures or creases/folds. There should not be more than one filter on a retention plate, nor multiple use of a disposable filter.
- ✓ If a perforated bottom container is used, the non-scrubbed person should be sure to check the bottom filter(s).
- ✓ All retention plates should be inspected. The plate must not be dislodged and should be fully engaged.
- ✓ The container should be inspected for residual water or condensation within the container. A wet pack/wet set should be considered contaminated and returned for reprocessing.
- ✓ If damage/dents to the bottom lip of the container or in the lid are noted, it can cause a gap or break in the compression indentation in the gasket and should not be used.

#### Consult your rigid container manufacturer's IFU for performance measures specific to your containers.

Information contained in this document has been compiled from container manufacturers' Instructions for Use, ANSI/AAMI ST79:2010 & A1:2010 & A2:2011 & A3:2012 Standards and AORN's 2012 Perioperative Standards and Recommended Practices. Reference data as of January 2013.

## CENTRAL SUPPLY CHECKLIST

### PRE-CLEANING PREPARATION

- ✓ Remove all disposable indicator cards and locks.
- ✓ Upon removal of the lid, unscrew the filter retention plate(s) in the lid and remove and discard the disposable filter(s).
- ✓ If using perforated container bottoms, remove the retention plate(s) and remove and discard the disposable filter(s).
- ✓ Reusable filters should be inspected for rips, tears, pitting, cracks, dents, foreign material or other signs of damage. **If any signs of damage exist, or if the recorded removal date is near, discard filter.** If not, place filters back inside retention plates.
- ✓ Inspect the edges of the container lid and bottom to ensure there are no sharp burrs or dents that may affect the gasket seal or proper lid closure.
- ✓ The seal in the inner lid must be completely inserted and undamaged (no cracks, cuts, tears or separation, visible degradation or color change).
- ✓ Retention plates should be inspected for distorted shape, bent levers that do not secure plates properly and inadequate spring or compression. Verify that the filter retention post(s) in the base and lid are secure.
- ✓ When loading in the washer, ensure that all parts are separated so the detergent and water can contact the entire surface of the container. Container should be washed in neutral pH detergents to avoid damage.
- ✓ Place the container bases on the washing unit in such a manner that they do not collect fluids and process per the manufacturer's IFU's — typically upside down and flat. Lids should be placed at an angle and retention plates should be placed in an instrument basket and/or away from direct, high pressure spray.



### PREP AND ASSEMBLY

- ✓ Inspect the container for defects: the container should be free from cracking, corrosion and pitting; rivets and screws should be secure; handles, closures and clasps should not be loose.
- ✓ Ensure the container bottoms, lids and all components (filters, plates, etc.) are dry prior to assembly.
- ✓ Inspect the rim of the lid to ensure the gasket is in good condition and free from cracks. A cracked gasket may indicate age and/or deterioration and the container should not be used. Remove the lids from service and return for repair.
- ✓ Inspect the lid to ensure the latches are not bent and can open up and down easily, the latch spring is not protruding and the latch bracket is not separated from the lid. Ensure there are no dents in the lid that could affect the gasket's sealing capabilities.
- ✓ Check the container lid to ensure that a noticeable bounce occurs upon opening. An absence of a noticeable bounce may indicate the need for gasket replacement or further handle inspection.
- ✓ Inspect gasket for visible compression indentation formed by the upper lip of the container bottom. The compression indentation should be uniform and continuous around the entire gasket length.
- ✓ If there are dents on upper lip of container that comes in contact with the gasket, it should not be used, as proper seal may not occur.
- ✓ Upon placing the filters in the holder and securing, inspect the retention plates to ensure proper locking of the mechanism.
- ✓ Inspect the container to ensure latches are not loose or separating from the base, the handles are not too loose and the handle sleeve is not cracked or torn. Upon closing, make sure that a solid click occurs when latching.
- ✓ Place the labels in the holders, ensuring the holders are not loose. Thread the locks through the lock holder and secure. Assure that external indicators are attached.

**NOTE:** Hospitals should have a procedure in place to routinely check the performance of containerized systems. Sterilant enters through discrete portals in a container system and then must diffuse throughout the inside of the container system and finally to the items being sterilized. It is important to ensure that retained air is completely removed by vacuum or displacement; otherwise, it will interfere with steam contact and, thus, with sterilization.



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**NOTE:** All filters, including reusable PTFE filters, must be inspected

**Consult your rigid container manufacturer's IFU for performance measures specific to your containers.**

For more information, please visit:

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