

Why Outpatient Centers Need Specialized Medical Laundry Services

AN EBOOK FROM
NIXON MEDICAL

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APPAREL & LINEN SERVICE SPECIALISTS



All types of industries require laundering services, from healthcare and hotels to manufacturing and restaurants. There are laundering companies that serve all of these industries, using the same laundry facilities, delivery trucks, and operating procedures for each.

Outpatient healthcare centers, however, produce hazardous laundry, and therefore, require specialized laundry services to minimize risks and maximize health, safety, and peace-of-mind for patients.

Read this eBook to learn why outpatient centers need specialized medical laundry services.

What's Inside

This eBook will focus on the specific medical laundry needs of outpatient centers, helping you understand why generalized laundry vendors are not always equipped to meet your needs.

Use the contents of this eBook to ensure your outpatient healthcare center is getting the specialized medical laundry services it requires to keep staff and patients safe.

Specialized Versus General Laundry Services

The Risk of Using Generalized Laundry Services

Protocols That Specialized Laundry Vendors Follow

Services That Specialized Laundry Vendors Offer

Bonus: Safety Tips for Your Vendor During COVID-19

Switching to a Specialized Medical Laundry Service

Specialized Versus General Laundry Services

Outpatient healthcare centers that provide surgical treatments, gynecology exams, chemotherapy, infusion and transfusion services, among others, produce hazardous linen and apparel laundry. As a result, they require the expertise and compliant handling techniques of a specialized medical laundry service.

SPECIALIZED OUTPATIENT LAUNDRY VENDORS SPECIFICALLY SERVE:

- » Surgery Centers
- » Imaging Centers
- » Women's Health
- » Endoscopy Centers
- » General Practice
- » Oncology

GENERALIZED LAUNDRY VENDORS SERVE OUTPATIENT CENTERS, PLUS:

- » Inpatient Centers
- » Hotels or Motels
- » Restaurants
- » Manufacturing Plants
- » Spas and Gyms
- » Nail and Hair Salons

The Risk of Using Generalized Laundry Services

Due to the nature of outpatient healthcare, soiled medical apparel and linens can pose significant risks to your staff and patients if not handled properly. A generalized laundry vendor may not have the proper accreditations and may not use compliant techniques or handling methods necessary to keep everyone in your practice safe. The top three risks of using generalized laundry services include:

RISK OF CROSS-CONTAMINATION

Outpatient healthcare centers create laundry prone to bloodborne pathogens and other hazards. If not handled properly, you run the risk of cross-contamination between clean and soiled linens and hazardous exposures to staff and patients.

SPREAD OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Soiled healthcare laundry must be carefully handled, using biohazard labeled containers, color-coding systems, and other protocols to mitigate the risk of spreading infectious diseases to staff, patients, and subsequent family members.

INCOMPLIANCE WITH INDUSTRY REGULATIONS

The facilities, trucks, and techniques your laundry service provider uses should meet OSHA, CDC, Healthcare Laundry Accreditation Council (HLAC), and APIC standards, designed for the utmost sanitation.

Protocols That Specialized Laundry Vendors Follow

HLAC ACCREDITATION

HLAC-accreditation affirms that a healthcare laundry organization has passed an inspection of its facility, policies, procedures, and training programs. It also means that soiled products are being laundered at an off-site, accredited facility, and not taken home or laundered on-site, which could put people at risk.

COMPLIANT TECHNIQUES

Specialized, outpatient laundry vendors must follow compliant laundering techniques that meet requirements of OSHA, CDC, and APIC, including:

- » Maintaining exposure control plans and titration reports
- » Meeting bloodborne pathogens requirements
- » Meeting specific laundering temperatures
- » Utilizing specific wash formulas and process times

HEALTHCARE-SPECIFIC LAUNDERING PROCESS

Specialized laundry vendors must operate healthcare-specific laundering processes that eliminate any risk of cross-contamination. These processes should deploy negative airflow and the physical separation of soiled and clean products in facilities and delivery vehicles.



Services That Specialized Laundry Vendors Offer

Beyond accreditations, compliant techniques, and healthcare-specific laundering processes, a specialized laundry vendor will also have an acute understanding of outpatient healthcare. This means they will understand the ebbs and flows of your business, patient volumes, specialty supply demands, and challenges with inventory management. A specialized laundry vendor may provide these services:

COMPLETE SERVICE VERSUS DROP & GO

Practice managers who are focused on overseeing the patient experience don't have time to spend unpacking, distributing, and stocking supplies each week. Unlike generalized vendors that simply drop off packaged supplies, specialized vendors may deliver, stock, count, and manage inventory.

NO MINIMUMS VERSUS STRICT CONTRACTS

Patient volumes can fluctuate greatly in outpatient centers as procedures can be non-urgent, voluntary, or elective as opposed to essential. Outpatient-specific vendors that understand the nuances of patient flow won't behold clients to arbitrary minimums.

SPECIALTY SUPPLIES VERSUS A GENERALIZED SELECTION

Outpatient-specific vendors will understand the highly specialized nuances of your outpatient practice, such as catering to women's health or high-end imaging, requiring specific patient gowns and premium apparel and linens. A specialized vendor will offer an inventory selection that meets these needs.

Bonus: Safety Tips for Your Vendor During COVID-19

Specialized laundry vendors know how sensitive medical apparel and linens are in outpatient facilities. The aforementioned accreditations, techniques, and laundering processes ensure your laundry vendor is keeping you and your outpatient healthcare center compliant with industry regulations.

Today, as everyone continues to navigate the threat of COVID-19, vendors of any kind are encouraged to take safety to the next level when entering your facility.

SHARE THESE TIPS WITH YOUR LAUNDRY VENDOR AS THEY CAN HELP KEEP YOUR STAFF, YOUR PATIENTS, AND THEIR FAMILIES SAFE TODAY AND IN A POST-COVID WORLD.

- » Ask vendors to screen the health of their workforce
- » Discuss alternative delivery times with your vendors
- » Require vendors to wash their hands upon arrival
- » Have vendors enter through a side or back entrance
- » Ensure they contact you upon arrival and/or provide a specific arrival time
- » Have vendors keep products wrapped, including with heat-sealed packaging
- » Have vendors schedule inventory checks for when staff is off-site
- » Ask vendors to utilize technology or notes to flag questionable garments
- » Use your approved communication methods
- » Ask vendors to reinforce social distancing, masks, and gloves
- » Avoid signing hand-held PDAs or reusing pens

Need to Switch to a Specialized Laundry Vendor?

We Can Help.

Nixon Medical is a leading service provider of medical linens and apparel serving outpatient healthcare centers nationwide. We provide trusted medical apparel and linen rental services, HLAC-accredited laundering services, expert inventory management, and custom and reliable service.

We Know the Needs of Outpatient Healthcare Better Than Anyone

In addition to implementing and optimizing all of the protocols and service measures discussed in this eBook, we take our service difference one step further, offering:

- ✔ **FREE SAME-DAY SPECIAL DELIVERIES**
We know unexpected needs arise and accommodate your special deliveries for no added costs.
- ✔ **ACCESS TO ROUTE SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE**
We give you easy, personalized, anytime access to your dedicated Route Service Representative.
- ✔ **CUSTOM EMBROIDERY FOR PROFESSIONALISM**
We boost your professionalism with free custom embroidery for lab coats, floor mats, and more.

Ready to Make the Switch to a Specialized Medical Laundry Service Provider?

Contact us for a Free Risk Review or for a quote on medical apparel and linens.

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About Nixon Medical

Nixon Medical is a leading service provider of medical linens and apparel serving outpatient healthcare centers nationwide. We provide trusted medical apparel and linen rental services, HLAC-accredited laundering services, expert inventory management, and custom and reliable service.

We are proud of our All About Service™ reputation, and now we are proud to be All About Safety, too, implementing and optimizing all of the safety protocols discussed in this eBook.

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