

General maintenance of steam sterilisers

Tips for safe and effective use

By Deborah Thame, Director, STS Health

To ensure a high standard of performance throughout your steam sterilisers' life it is important that the unit is maintained in good working order. Establishing a regular maintenance programme will provide you with reliable trouble-free performance and the peace of mind that will ensure the equipment is functioning properly.

There are three areas for consideration:

- Installation and operation testing
- Routine operator maintenance (chart below)
- Servicing and testing

Installation and operation tests

Installation checks for new sterilisers are now required under Australian Standards and will demonstrate that the steriliser and the area in which it's installed comply with the manufacturer's specifications. Operational tests are also conducted to ensure the equipment installed operates with predetermined limits when used in accordance with its operational procedures. These tests should always be conducted by an authorised service company.

Routine operator maintenance (Chart)

Routine operator maintenance is essential to ensure your steriliser continues to work correctly.

Some general cleaning of the rubber seal chamber should be carried out daily while other cleaning and checks can be on a weekly or monthly cycle. To assist you further please refer to the maintenance



chart (Chart). Keep it handy and refer to it as a reminder on what checks and tasks you need to complete daily, weekly and monthly.

Servicing and testing

Complying with servicing and testing will help to ensure the safety and reliability of your steam steriliser. Regular servicing, from an approved service company, will reduce the frequency of breakdowns and will help to detect many problems before they become expensive to repair.

In addition there are 4 key test areas that need to be carried out to validate the steriliser. These include:

- 1) Heat distribution - determine the "coldest" spot located within the chamber.
- 2) Penetration time test - to measure the real time taken for the centre of a "challenge pack" to reach active sterilisation temperature.
- 3) Cycle validation test - validates a single sterilising cycle as documented by Australian Standards.
- 4) Biological test - biological confirmation of consistent sterilising performance.

STS Health is a wholly owned Australian company specialising in the marketing, distribution and servicing of steam sterilisation equipment. For further information email info@stshealth.com.au or telephone (08) 9244 4628.

GENERAL MAINTENANCE TIPS FOR THE SAFE AND EFFECTIVE USE OF YOUR STERILISER

IMPORTANT: Use only the best quality distilled water in your steriliser.

Failure to do so may result in damage to your steriliser and the manufacturer's warranty may be negated. For water specifications applicable to your steriliser, refer to the operator manual. Remember you can always ask your service supplier to assist you by testing water quality for you.

OPERATOR MAINTENANCE:

DAILY	- Clean the 'rubber' chamber seal and wipe the inner surfaces and trays. Use a soft cloth, mild detergent and warm water. Rinse well. - Clean the metal surface that seals against the chamber seal very gently using a nylon scourer. Use mild detergent and warm water. Rinse well.
WEEKLY	- Clean the sterilisation chamber, trays and tray rack. Use a soft cloth, mild detergent and warm water. Rinse well. - Clean the outer surfaces. Use a soft cloth, mild detergent and/or disinfectant and warm water. - Drain and flush the water reservoir. Draining and flushing the water reservoir is not required for sterilisers that do not recycle water. *
MONTHLY	- Check operation of door; if required, lubricate hinge and closing mechanism. Use silicone oil or similar lubricating spray. Use sparingly.* - If primary filters are fitted, remove and clean debris as required.
AS NEEDED	- Chamber seals and bacterial filters need to be replaced periodically, the frequency depends on the brand of steriliser and usage rate, please refer to manufacturer's handbook.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Other maintenance, such as chemical cleaners and de-scalers may be required by individual manufacturers, please refer to your operator manual for details.

* Please check with the manufacturer's instructions since this maintenance may not be required for your particular steriliser.

For info about steam steriliser service and maintenance: www.stshealth.com.au Tel: (08) 9244 4628.

