

The Sterilization Process: Basic Steps

Protect

Before handling contaminated materials or entering the sterilization room:

Hand hygiene	never use the sterilization room sink to wash hands
Don PPE	● eye protection ● mask ● apron/lab coat ● sleeve guards ● gloves ● closed-toe footwear
Remove PPE	discard in sterilization room, exit, then wash hands ● when returning, wash hands, don fresh PPE

Manual Clean

Collect	contaminated <u>reusable</u> items to be processed using the appropriate biohazard container (for new items, skip to Bag and Wrap)
Soak	items in a cleaning solution
Scrub	items with a brush <u>underwater</u> in the sink
Rinse	under running water

Ultrasonic Clean

Load ultrasonic	add cleaner than process
Rinse	remove (basket) items from ultrasonic then rinse
Air dry	place items onto a bib, a paper towel, etc. until dry

Bag and Wrap

Label	sterilization bags: date, lot/load #, operator initials, item description
Examine	new items or the cleaned reusable items: all must be dry, free of debris, nicks, cuts & divots
Bag and wrap	each item into a labeled bag
Document	<u>Sterilization Log</u> : date, operator, lot/load #, item description, temperature, time, pressure
Load autoclave	stand bags on their edge ● do not crowd
Type 5 integrator	add to each load in its own bag
Spore test	monthly (minimum): process bagged spore test strip with/without a load

Sterilize

Process	secure autoclave door, set gauges, begin cycle
Tidy up	sterilization room before exiting
Empty	ensure items are dry before removing processed bags
Inspect	the processed Type 5 integrator “passed” then attach to <u>Sterilization Log</u>
Spore test	if spore testing, prepare processed test strip for analyzation from an independent lab
Store	items in the dedicated location for sterile supplies