

LAUNDRY PROTOCOLS

- Staff should wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to reduce the potential zoonotic risk when handling contaminated laundry - e.g. full PPE, including gloves, face mask, and eye protection, should be worn when handling urine soaked bedding from a known or suspected case of canine leptospirosis.
- Ensure any broken skin, or wounds, are kept covered.
- Have hand washing and/or disinfection facilities easily available for use after handling laundry.
- Soiled laundry should be segregated from clean laundry to avoid cross-contamination. The use of impervious laundry bags in each kennel area is recommended; bags that fit over wheeled trolleys and that can be laundered with the bedding are particularly useful.
- Use of normal machine washing with a commercial laundry detergent and machine drying are generally sufficient to greatly reduce the numbers of most significant infectious pathogens from most soiled linens.
- If laundry is washed in cold water, an approved cold-water detergent must be used according to label directions.
- Hot water washing will not disinfect items by itself. High temperature (> 71.1°C) washing can significantly reduce bacterial numbers, but standard household washing machines often do not reach this temperature, even if the hot water setting is used.
- Ideally the washing machine settings should be:
 - Maintain 65 °C for no less than ten minutes
 - Maintain 71 °C for no less than three minutes
 - Contain the addition of chemicals (i.e. bleach or appropriate disinfectant, for heat-labile materials, or lower temperatures).
- The heat and drying effects of tumble drying are vital in the laundering process, and are responsible for decreasing bacterial counts on bedding and clothing. Therefore, laundry should not be considered clean until it has also been dried completely, ideally using the highest heat possible. Tumble drying is recommended, especially for any materials that may have been contaminated with a transmissible infectious pathogen
- Line-drying linens will have the advantage of also exposing the surface of the fabrics to ultraviolet (UV) light, provided they hung to dry in the sun. However, all surfaces need to be exposed to sunlight for this method to be effective so care should be taken with hanging items.



Laundry from Infectious Cases

- Laundry from potentially infectious cases should be treated separately from other laundry.
- Linens should be collected in a separate laundry bag and washed and dried separately.
- Linens grossly contaminated with a potentially infectious nature (e.g. faeces from patients with diarrhoea or urine from an animal with a urinary tract infection) as much organic material as possible should be removed by hand (using gloves and disposable tissue or paper towel). The items should then be pre-soaked in bleach solution (9 parts water: 1 part household bleach) for 10- 15 minutes prior to machine washing.
- Bleach should also be added to the household detergent in the washing machine as per label instructions.
- Dispose of material that is difficult to clean effectively and safely.