COVID-19: Alert – Disposable Shoe/Boot Covers

August 20, 2020

Situation:
Shoe/boot covers for use in the following settings will be in very limited supply during FY21 Q2 and possibly into Q3. The forecast for 2021 remains unknown.
- Restricted and semi restricted areas such as Sterile Processing, Procedural and OB
- Pharmacy (USP 797/800 for sterile compounding)

Background:
The circumstances contributing to the limited supply of shoe covers are as follows:
- 5 million shoe covers that were purchased by Trinity Health were unable to be used due to complaints that these shoe covers were slippery and might contribute to colleague falls. These shoe covers were pulled from use.
- Protective attire such as shoe covers (and boot covers) that are made from traditional raw materials (spunbond, meltblown and spunbond polypropylene – referred to as SMS/SPP), will fall significantly by mid-September due to a raw material shortage. This raw material shortage is anticipated to continue through the fall months with no known resolution date. This shortage will affect all suppliers who manufacture products made of these materials.

Assessment:
- Conservation and alternative strategies for disposable footwear need to be deployed
- The Association of perioperative Registered Nurses (AORN) requires only that fluid-resistant shoe covers or boots be worn in instances when gross contamination can reasonably be anticipated (e.g., orthopedic surgery) [Regulatory Requirement]

Recommendation:
- Shoe/boot covers must be reserved for use in the ministries’ restricted/semi-restricted areas.
- Prioritize boot covers for use in instances where gross contamination is anticipated. Such procedures include, but is not limited to trauma, orthopedic surgery and C-Sections.
- As an alternative to disposable footwear, colleagues should wear clean shoes that are dedicated for use within the restricted/semi-restricted areas.
- AORN requirements for dedicated shoes are as follows:
  - Closed toes and backs
  - Low heels
  - Non-skid soles
  - No holes or perforations
  - Non-fabric/cloth material
    - Ideally dedicated shoes should be washable or cleanable
    - Shoes must also meet OSHA, and the ministries’ safety requirements
- Non-dedicated footwear (typically worn by vendors, facilities, radiology techs, etc.) must be disinfected using an EPA approved disinfectant prior to being worn into restricted/semi-restricted areas.
- Ministries should update any facility/regional system policies to reflect required practices.