

SUPPORT FOR MONITORING THE 1 HOUR HOLD TIME BETWEEN PRECLEANING AND MANUAL CLEANING OF ENDOSCOPES

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Prompt and efficient endoscope reprocessing is one of the key steps to effective removal of soil and therefore infection prevention. Although all steps of reprocessing are meant to be performed without time delay, certain endoscope manufacturers have validated a **one hour hold time** between the precleaning step and initiation of manual cleaning. Because of this one hour hold time, there becomes a need to monitor the time elapsed between precleaning and manual cleaning to determine whether or not a delayed reprocessing procedure needs to be performed on that endoscope. Determination of time will help to eliminate unnecessary long-term submersions for delayed reprocessing and will also provide documentation that the one hour hold time has not been exceeded. This elapsed time must also then be communicated to reprocessing staff so that they know whether or not the endoscopes need to be soaked for an extended time.

In their delayed reprocessing customer statement from January 2018, Olympus recommends that the facility develop a process to track the time from the completion of precleaning to initiation of manual cleaning in order to determine whether the extended soak procedure should be performed. According to their statement, the same **one hour** hold time applies to the lag between manual cleaning and disinfection, both manually or in an AER.

Additionally, AORN states that, “Performing precleaning and the remaining processing steps within an hour after a procedure may prevent formation of a mature biofilm even under conditions favorable to rapid biofilm development.” Additionally, their guideline recommends the following in IV.d., “Processing of endoscopes and endoscope accessories should begin as soon as possible after transport to the endoscopy processing room or within the manufacturer’s recommended time to processing. Performing processing steps **within one hour** after a procedure may help prevent formation of biofilm.” Furthermore, in recommendation IV.d.1., it is stated that, “When it is not possible to initiate the cleaning process within the endoscope manufacturer’s recommended time to cleaning, the manufacturer’s IFU for delayed processing should be followed.

AORN recommendation IV.d.3. states that, “A procedure should be developed and implemented for recording the times that the procedure is completed and cleaning is initiated. A process for recording the times that the procedure ended and cleaning was initiated enables processing personnel to ascertain how long the endoscope has been awaiting processing, to establish priority order, and to determine whether routine processing within the manufacturer’s recommended time to cleaning is achievable, and if not, to implement the manufacturer’s procedures for delayed processing.”

SGNA states that “All steps should be completed sequentially and immediately following the procedure. Refer to the manufacturer’s recommendations for delayed recleaning and reprocessing. Also, SGNA states that there are certain characteristics of reprocessing that impede its effectiveness. One of the steps that they note is a lag time or delay in reprocessing.

ANSI/AAMI ST91 states that, “If it is not possible to start the cleaning process immediately after use, the endoscope manufacturer’s written IFU for delayed processing should be followed.” Therefore, according to the endoscope manufacturer, that one hour time frame between precleaning and manual cleaning should be monitored and a procedure developed to ensure that it is not exceeded.

Therefore, both endoscope manufacturer’s IFUs, AORN, SGNA and AAMI ST91 support the process of monitoring the time delay between precleaning and manual cleaning and between manual cleaning and disinfection. This delay should be tracked and has to be clearly communicated to staff in the reprocessing room for them to determine whether or not a delayed reprocessing procedure must be initiated. The one hour hold time also applies to the delay between manual cleaning and disinfection.

Use of the 1-hour indicator from Healthmark is an easy way to clearly identify if the one hour time delay has or has not been exceeded.

