I understand that flexible endoscopes must be labeled before being placed into storage. What needs to be included on the label?

A: Yes, flexible endoscopes that have undergone disinfection should be labeled before being placed into the storage cabinet. Labeling patient-ready endoscopes will help inform the caregiver that the endoscope is safe for patient use. The label should include:

- Date the flexible endoscope was processed
- Name(s) of the technician(s) who performed the processing
- Expiration date or maximum storage time, which is based on facility’s policies and procedures

REFERENCE

ANSI/AAMI ST91:2021 Flexible and semi-rigid endoscope processing in health care facilities 11.2.3 Identification of endoscopes during storage

Sometimes, when we remove packages from the sterilizer, not all of the lines on the sterilization tape have turned black. Why does this happen—and are we able to release these items?

A: If the lines on the sterilization tape do not all turn, the items cannot be released for patient use. The supervisor should be made aware of the issue, and the reasons should be investigated. The following incidents can lead to that problem: the way the sterilizer was loaded, sterilizer cycle selection, sterilizer malfunction or the way the tape was stored. Some sterilization tape manufacturers specify storage conditions; consult the tape manufacturer’s instructions for use for more information.

REFERENCE

ANSI/AAMI ST79:2017 (and 2020 Amendments) Comprehensive guide to steam sterilization and sterility assurance in health care facilities, 13.7.5.2 Recall of items processed by the health care facility

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Medical Resources Group Limited
888-674-6621 | sales@mrgona.com
www.mrgona.com

Natalie Lind, CRCST, CHL, FCS, is the Director of Education for HSPA. She has more than 30 years of experience in the Sterile Processing (SP) profession, having served as a technician, department manager, professional educator, consultant and author. Lind has presented SP programs both nationally and internationally and has authored more than 200 SP-related articles.