



**Choose a Linen, Uniform and Facility Services
Provider Acknowledged
for Making Consumer Safety a Priority**

Most Reliable Laundry HACCP Resource

Quality Controls Reduce Risk

Inspectors Verify Laundry Processes

Microbial Testing Quantifies Cleanliness



VERIFYING BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES, QUANTIFYING CLEANLINESS OUTCOMES

Hygienically Clean Hospitality certification answers the higher calling for objective verification of laundry performance. Your use of a certified linen, uniform and facility services provider reflects your insistence on reassurance that suppliers are as conscientious about the sanitization of their work practices as you.

Certified linen and uniform services commit to cleanliness through third-party, quantified biological testing and inspection. This process eliminates subjectivity by focusing on outcomes and results that verify textiles cleaned in these facilities meet appropriate hygienically clean standards and best management practices (BMPs) for full- and limited-service restaurants and other hospitality operations.

Hygienically Clean's rigorous microbial testing protocol subjects laundered items to repeated examination. For initial certification, if products pass an initial test, a second test of different items is scheduled. When these pass this second test, the laundry is inspected for compliance with management practices per the Hygienically Clean standard. A third such test takes place as part of the inspection protocol. A successful inspection and passed test at this juncture certifies the facility. Maintaining certification requires testing on a quarterly basis and inspection (with testing) every three years.

Hygienically Clean inspectors verify laundry practices including washing (detergent formulas, temperature, disinfectant, pH, extraction), drying, sorting, inspection and transportation. Each certified laundry's operational flowchart is evaluated, ensuring these procedures (as well as pickup, unloading and sorting of soiled items and sorting of clean laundry) are mapped. Employees' use of personal protective equipment is documented and ATP testing samples hard surfaces for microbial contamination.

Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) practices are examined, including the laundry's techniques for:

- Conducting hazard analysis
- Determining CCPs, monitoring their control, correcting them if not under control
- Validating and verifying HACCP system effectiveness
- Documenting and record-keeping to show ongoing conformance

On-site laundry inspections also evaluate processes and protocols relevant to handling and processing textile products used in hospitality establishments for consistency with HACCP, Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI), U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), American Hotel & Laundry Association (AHLA), and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines.

DEEP COMMITMENT TO HACCP/GFSI

Linen and uniform services can explain their processes for picking up, cleaning and redelivering reusable textile products, but Hygienically Clean Hospitality certified suppliers take this to a higher level. They are the most dedicated to proving the garments and other items supplied to your operation are not hazards. Their adherence to Hygienically Clean standards ensures third-party verification of their HACCP/GFSI efforts: that they control hazards in their own facilities to prevent hazards from appearing in yours.

Here's how Hygienically Clean prompts certified uniform suppliers' adherence to the 7-step HACCP system and accordingly controls their biological, chemical and physical vulnerabilities:

1. CONDUCT HAZARD ANALYSIS

Quality assurance requirements in the Hygienically Clean standard identify the key steps in the outsourced laundry process, from receiving soiled textiles (picked up at customers' locations) to washing and re-delivery. Certified suppliers must address their approach to each step to determine where significant hazards could occur.

2. ESTABLISH CRITICAL CONTROL POINTS

Best management practices (BMPs), based on more than a century of collaboration between the textile services industry's most proficient uniform suppliers, are focused on the points, steps and procedures critical to hygiene. The initial laundry industry cleanliness certification program established in 2005 documented these practices better than ever before; evolution to Hygienically Clean certification in 2012 governs the variety of approaches providers take to each step.

3. ESTABLISH CRITICAL LIMITS

Hygienically Clean introduced standards in North America (based on long-held global standards) for textile product cleanliness as measured by microbial testing that cultures laundered fabric as opposed to surface-monitoring (ATP). The certification initiated better science to establish that the laundry process is in control.

4. ESTABLISH MONITORING PROCEDURES

Such microbial testing takes place four times per year as certified operations remain vigilant of the need to eliminate or reduce hazards that may appear. ATP monitoring of work surfaces is also required. These procedures monitor processes within specific limits for hospitality.

5. ESTABLISH CORRECTIVE ACTION

Initial certification is an arduous process: launderers must hit thresholds in three consecutive rounds of laundered product testing prior to the normal periodic testing cycle. Indication that any process is out of control triggers predetermined corrective action.

6. VERIFICATION

Hygienically Clean inspectors verify laundries' compliance with BMPs and independent labs test their laundered textile products. This makes the system self-correcting and ensures double-checking.

7. RECORDKEEPING

Inspection records and test results are maintained for the duration of certification plus three years. Maintenance and equipment calibration records are maintained for six years. Any procedures related to HACCP/GFSI validation and verification are documented. Records are established to show:

- Ongoing conformance to CCP requirements
- Corrective action for any non-conformance

FLOW CHART REQUIREMENTS: KEY TO CCP VIGILANCE

Consistent with HACCP, Hygienically Clean inspections examine a linen and uniform service supply facility's operational flow chart and verify the management team has ensured that best practices prevent contamination at each step. Inspectors monitor operations and follow up after the inspection regarding deviations or modifications.

Scheduled pickup of items to be laundered. To help prevent cross contamination, these are separated in trucks from other textile products. Containers vary in size. Larger transport cages are used when picked-up goods go to a holding facility (known as a “branch,” “service center” or “depot”) before shipping to a plant with laundry equipment. Items to be laundered are not mingled with newly washed items in the same cleaned/ lined carts.

Unloading at the laundry. Garments and textiles are dropped off at a designated area separated from recently laundered items.

Sorting to wash. Textile products used by a uniform supplier's hospitality customers are separated from those for other industries, sorted by degree of soil, color and fabric; stored in slings/hampers; and staged in preparation for washing.

Washing and conditioning. Hospitality items are cleaned with wash formulas that optimally combine wash time, water temperature, detergent chemistry and mechanical action. Injections of chemicals (such as bleach) are gauged and confirmed. Similar measurement of equipment function confirms performance of various stages of washing.

Transporting from washing to drying/finishing. Material handling systems such as conveyors and overhead rail systems minimize the role of the human touch in transporting washed items from washers to other laundry machinery that subjects the items to higher heat: dryers, presses, steam tunnels.

Inspection. At any stage of the laundering process to this point, laundry staff may identify items that should not be redelivered to customers due to wear, damage, wrong size, etc. In such cases, avoiding incomplete deliveries often requires pulling replacement products from inventory—washing and drying/finishing these first, then “catching them up” with other items processed previously to assemble the complete order for delivery. Inspection may also reveal washed items that require only repair and refinishing before rejoining other items to be delivered.





Sling-bag loading of machines, automated ironing/folding, belt conveying to packout—tasks previously manual for many laundries now mechanized and minimally hands-on.

Drying/finishing. Similar to the optimization of time, temperature and mechanical action in washing, procedures for drying and finishing are customized, accounting for differences in product and fabric type, weight and construction. Not all garments are placed in a dryer, for example, because they are fully dried in steam tunnel finishing.

Clean garment sorting. Most garments are sorted on rails for delivery by route, stop and wearer after finishing. Laundries automate this process to varying degrees, i.e., shifting garments from one rail to another by hand or conveyor. Hand hygiene is emphasized in manual transfer.

Final inspection and order assembly. Laundered items are covered to protect them consistent with customer requirements for protection such as poly-bagging. Pre-washed bulk goods including floor mats may be pulled from inventory to complete orders. Materials used for racking these are specified (and racks kept clean) to avoid contamination risk.

Redelivery. Personnel who work in loading and unloading areas are trained to avoid mingling incoming and outgoing garments. Truck interiors are kept clean and free from dirt.

QA REQUIREMENTS ENSURE INSPECTIONS' EFFECTIVENESS

Hygienically Clean certified laundries maintain a Quality Assurance (QA) manual that documents their complete range of processes. This gives inspectors a focal point upon arrival for evaluating compliance with these numerous procedures. The QA manual represents the hub of control measures [best management practices (BMPs)] that minimize the potential for error. Suppliers' compliance with BMPs may require capital investment (equipment upgrades) or procedural changes. The result is greater operational effectiveness in:

PLANT FACILITIES

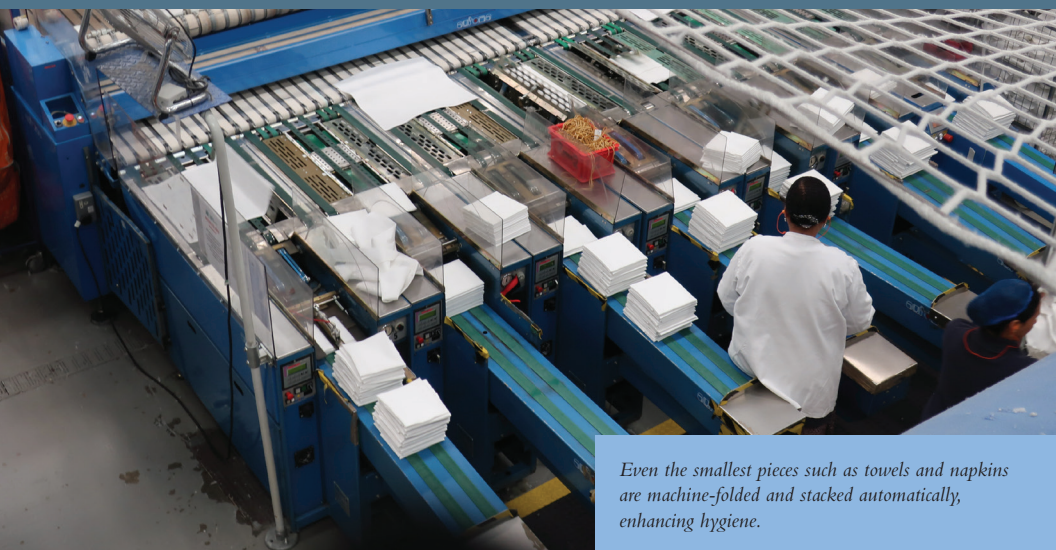
- Cross-contamination prevention between soiled and clean areas
- Equipment operation, maintenance, calibration

HOUSEKEEPING

- Use, cleaning and care of equipment
- Cleaning work surfaces, stations, carts
- Selection, measurement and proper use of cleaning supplies
- Cleaning schedule

LAUNDRY PROCESS

- Soiled textile product handling
- Washing procedures
- Drying procedures
- Garment inspection
- Transportation
- Delivery



Even the smallest pieces such as towels and napkins are machine-folded and stacked automatically, enhancing hygiene.

LAUNDRY EXPERTISE FACILITATES CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The foremost experts in laundry science drive the credibility and quality of best management practices (BMPs). No other certification process matches Hygienically Clean's knowledge of the complete textile processing cycle. Hygienically Clean certified linen and uniform service operators are united in the improvement of BMPs through research, collaboration, information-sharing and education.

Independent thinking. Outside-the-industry expertise combines with launderers' 100+ years of developing BMPs to gradually toughen Hygienically Clean requirements. Objective experts in bacteriology, infection control and other sciences advise inspectors, guiding the constant review to ensure the designation continues to enforce the highest standards for producing clean textiles. The Hygienically Clean Advisory Board implements improvements.

High-level collaboration. As members of TRSA, the association of linen, uniform and facility services, Hygienically Clean Hospitality certified laundries collaborate to steadily improve standard operating procedures (SOPs) for sorting, handling, processing and finishing reusable linens and garments. Together they monitor and react to emerging federal, state and professional standards related to large-scale laundering.

Quantified improvement. Because certified companies' laundered items' microbial content must not exceed prescribed microbial levels in routine testing, processing success is continuously quantified. As conditions change—such as water quality, textile fabric composition and wash chemistry content—laundered product quality must be maintained or improved. Microbial testing proves it.

CULTURED MEDIA FOR TEXTILES, ATP FOR SURFACES

To confirm laundered item quality, two culture-based microbial testing methods are used in qualifying and maintaining laundries for certification.

- RODAC plate test: ensures reduction of overall microbial content, determines overall microbial count for yeast and mold
- USP 62: confirms absence of specific bacteria

Linen and uniform services ship their goods for testing to a Hygienically Clean-approved laboratory of their choice.

In addition, inspectors use ATP testing on-site to sample hard surfaces for microbial contamination. This verifies regular cleaning of surfaces that contact textiles.

Culture-based methods quantify the absence of bioburden on laundered items: below 50 colony forming units per decimeter of fabric as measured by the RODAC plate test, the long-held international standard for safety in food manufacturing. USP 62 confirms the absence of:

- Salmonella
- Escherichia coli (E-coli)
- Staphylococcus aureus
- Pseudomonas aeruginosa
- Candida albicans
- Bile-tolerant gram-negative bacteria
- Clostridium sporogenes

ATP testing use is limited to hard surfaces as prescribed by the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology. This form of measurement does not distinguish among bacteria, fungi, viruses or any other intracellular source of ATP. Many test manufacturers also do not designate this technology's use for items with porous surfaces such as textiles.



WHAT TO EXPECT OF YOUR LAUNDRY

Hygienically Clean is delivering to the North American linen, uniform and facility services industry an infrastructure for ensuring consistent cleanliness of reusable textiles in the same manner as the AHLA and FDA bring auditable safety standards to hotels and retail food establishments around the world. Parallels between these efforts are numerous. For example, Hygienically Clean Hospitality has adopted long-established international cleanliness standards for reusable textiles.

AHLA, FDA and Hygienically Clean both promote these as the key benefits of seeking certification:

- Demonstrates compliance with legal and industry requirements
- Promotes customer confidence in public health and consumer expectations

Every hospitality facility understands the advantages of having:

- Uniform standards long recognized by industry and government officials
- A longstanding commitment to cleanliness and safety
- Dedicated resources to improve customer safety
- Document policies, procedures, work instructions
- Implemented a risk assessment and a HACCP
- Best management practices and industry guidelines
- Conduct internal audits

Each of these points has a laundry industry. FDA and Hygienically Clean are identical in the need to:

- Control and manage risks
- Protect brands
- Improve consumer confidence
- Ensure product integrity

You and your linen, uniform and facility services supplier's management should have the same urgency. Consider only Hygienically Clean certified such suppliers by including this requirement in your request-for-proposal (RFP).



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