

WASHCon Glossary of Terms

Autoclave	A pressure chamber used to sterilize equipment and supplies by subjecting them to high pressure saturated steam at 121 °C (249°F) for around 15–20 minutes using electric power.
Boiler/steamer	A type of boiler used to sterilize equipment where the steam is generated using electricity, rather than through the combustion of a fuel source.
Chlorhexidine	A disinfectant and antiseptic that is sometimes used to treat the umbilical cord of a newborn.
Chlorination	A method of water treatment in which chlorine is added to the water to disinfect it.
Clinical Staff	Any staff member who is involved with the direct treatment of patients. May include: doctors, nurses, midwives, physician/medical assistants, dentists, physical therapists.
Distillation	A process which involves boiling the water and then condensing the steam into a clean container to remove impurities. Distillation equipment is often found in healthcare facility laboratories.
Director	The head of or person responsible for managing the healthcare facility.
Dry heat sterilizer	Utilizes hot air that is free from water vapor and where this moisture plays a minimal or no role in the process of sterilization, using electric power.
Environmental disinfectant	A cleaning agent used to disinfect healthcare facility surfaces, such as chlorine or alcohol.
General waste	Non-infectious waste materials such as polythene bags and kitchen scraps.
Filtration	Removes impurities from water by means of a fine physical barrier; may be a chemical or a biological process.
Functionality	A handwashing station, toilet or shower may be considered functional if it can be used for its designed purpose during the observation (e.g. a sink is considered a functional handwashing station if it has enough water flowing from the tap to wash hands).
Hand hygiene facility	A facility with water access and place for water disposal. This may include a sink, bucket, or jerry can. A functional hand hygiene facility must have water accessible at the time of observation.
Hygiene	Conditions and practices that help to maintain health and prevent the spread of diseases, especially through cleanliness.
Improved water source	A water source that, by nature of its construction, is adequately protected from outside contamination, in particular fecal matter. It is expected to provide water of better quality and with greater

WASHCon Glossary of Terms

	convenience than traditional “unimproved” sources. Examples include: unprotected dug well, surface water, tanker trunk.
Incinerator	A furnace or apparatus for burning waste material at high temperatures until it is reduced to ash. In a healthcare setting, it is used to safely dispose of infectious waste, including sharps. Two chamber incinerators can reach temperatures of 850-1000°C while brick incinerators cannot reach such high temperatures.
Infectious waste	Waste material that contains viable (live) microorganisms, or toxins which may cause disease in humans. Infectious waste that is not in sharp form such as: bandages, clothing, plastics, or other items contaminated with human blood or other potentially infectious materials.
Inpatient	A patient who stays at the health facility full time, including at night, while receiving treatment.
Menstrual Hygiene Management	Separate sanitation facilities for females that provide privacy; soap, water and space for washing hands, private parts and clothes; and places for changing and disposing of materials used for managing menstruation.
Non-Clinical Staff	Staff members who work at the health facility in a capacity which does not involve the treatment of patients. May include: administrative staff, laboratory staff, cleaners, maintenance staff, drivers, security guards, cooks.
Outpatient	A patient who visits a health facility for treatment, without staying overnight.
Placenta	The temporary organ that protects and nourishes the baby during pregnancy. Also known as ‘afterbirth’, it is delivered after the baby.
Reduced mobility	A toilet is considered accessible to persons with reduced mobility if it can be accessed without steps or stairs, has handrails for support, has a door that is at least 80cm wide and has a door handle and seat are within reach of people using wheelchairs or crutches/sticks.
Sanitation	The provision of facilities and services for the safe disposal of human urine and feces.
Sharps waste	Waste contaminated with human blood or other potentially infectious materials with the potential to penetrate skin if not properly handled, such as: syringes, needles and broken glass.
Septic tank	A septic tank is a tank, typically underground, in which sewage is collected and allowed to decompose through bacterial activity before draining by means of a leaching field.
Sewage system	A sewerage system is a system of pipes that conveys sewage to a treatment plant or to a discharge point in the environment.

WASHCon Glossary of Terms

Usable toilet/latrine

A usable toilet/latrine is one that is accessible, functional and should provide sufficient privacy for users. In a functional toilet the hole or pit should not be blocked, water should be available for flush/pour flush toilets, and there should be no cracks, or leaks in the toilet structure. In order to provide sufficient privacy, the toilet stall should have walls without major holes, and a door which is unlocked when not in use (or for which a key is available at any time) and which can be locked from the inside during use.