

# Considerations for Purchasing a Table-top Steam Sterilizer

This checklist outlines key factors to consider when making decisions about reprocessing reusable medical devices and when purchasing a table-top steam sterilizer in community health care settings. For more information, see the [Best Practices for Cleaning, Disinfection and Sterilization of Medical Equipment/Devices](#) or email [ipac@oahpp.ca](mailto:ipac@oahpp.ca).

**The following qualities and components are recommended when purchasing a steam sterilizer:**

- Sterilizers must be capable of sterilizing the type of instruments that are used in each setting.
- The supplier's claims should be validated in the manufacturer's written material.
- Sterilizers must be installed, used and continuously maintained in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
- Sterilization cycles must be monitored with physical, biological and chemical monitors and the results of monitoring must be documented.

**Considerations for sterilization: Has an assessment been done to determine that the sterilizer is required? It may be more cost effective to use single use (disposable) instruments or equipment instead of reusable.**

- Is it possible to send reusable instruments or equipment requiring sterilization to an offsite third party medical device reprocessing provider that complies with recognized reprocessing standards?

**The table-top steam sterilizer should meet the following criteria:**

- The sterilizer has a printer/data logger to document a permanent record of physical parameters (time/temperature/pressure) plus sterilizer identification, date, time and load number for each cycle.
- The sterilizer has a Health Canada medical device license.

**The sterilizer manufacturer supplies the following information in writing:**

- Statement of the sterilizer's ability to sterilize the proposed medical devices (e.g., lumened instruments, hollow instruments, textiles, power tools, dental hand pieces, wrapped sets of instruments).
- A summary of documentation is supplied to validate the claim.
- Recommended sterility assurance monitoring:
  - Appropriate biological and chemical monitors.
  - Appropriate Class II (Bowie-Dick) chemical indicator for dynamic air removal sterilizers (if applicable).

- Manufacturer's instructions for use (e.g., user manual)
- Recommendations for preventative maintenance and care procedures and schedules
- Qualifications of technical service providers

**Additional Considerations:**

- Staff education related to reprocessing, sterilizer use and maintenance and trouble-shooting
- Warranty
- Associated supplies for sterilizer maintenance as per manufacturer directions such as:
  - Brushes for cleaning ports, pass through water tubes, etc. Brushes need to be of high quality, medical grade (so bristles won't fall out inside lumens)
  - Descaling products and supplies
  - Cloths, towels, wipes or other cleaning materials
  - Spray lubricant (may be recommended for hinges on sterilizer)
  - A flashlight to assist with inspection of the interior
  - Personal Protective Equipment (e.g., thermal gloves for handling hot instruments)
  - Cooling rack
  - Distilled water for steam generation (according to manufacturers instructions)

**References:**

1. College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta. Reprocessing critical & semi-critical equipment: a physician toolkit [Internet]. Edmonton, AB: College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta; 2010 [cited 2017 Jun 5]. Available from: [http://cpsa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/IPAC\\_Reprocessing\\_A\\_Physician\\_Toolkit.pdf?pdf=Reprocessing-Toolkit](http://cpsa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/IPAC_Reprocessing_A_Physician_Toolkit.pdf?pdf=Reprocessing-Toolkit)
2. Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee. Best practices for cleaning, disinfection and sterilization of medical equipment devices. 3rd ed. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2013. Available from: [http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/PIDAC\\_Cleaning\\_Disinfection\\_and\\_Sterilization\\_2013.pdf](http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/PIDAC_Cleaning_Disinfection_and_Sterilization_2013.pdf)