

# Spaulding's Classification of Medical Equipment/Devices and Required Level of Processing/Reprocessing

This chart is an excerpt from [Best Practices for Cleaning, Disinfection and Sterilization of Medical Equipment/Devices](#). It outlines Spaulding Classification which is the instrument classification system used for reprocessing decisions. For more information, please visit [www.publichealthontario.ca](http://www.publichealthontario.ca) or email [ipac@oahpp.ca](mailto:ipac@oahpp.ca).

Classification	Definition	Level of Processing/ Reprocessing	Examples
<b>CRITICAL Equipment/Device</b>	Equipment/device that enters sterile tissues, including the vascular system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cleaning followed by Sterilization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surgical instruments</li> <li>Implants</li> <li>Biopsy instruments</li> <li>Foot care equipment</li> <li>Eye and dental equipment</li> </ul>
<b>SEMICRITICAL Equipment/Device</b>	Equipment/device that comes in contact with non-intact skin or mucous membranes but does not penetrate them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cleaning followed by High- Level Disinfection (as a minimum)</li> <li>Sterilization is preferred</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respiratory therapy equipment</li> <li>Anaesthesia equipment</li> <li>Tonometer</li> </ul>
<b>NONCRITICAL Equipment/Device</b>	Equipment/device that touches only intact skin and not mucous membranes, or does not directly touch the client/patient/resident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cleaning followed by Low- Level Disinfection (in some cases, cleaning alone is acceptable)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ECG machines</li> <li>Oximeters</li> <li>Bedpans, urinals, commodes</li> </ul>

## References

Spaulding E. The role of chemical disinfection in the prevention of nosocomial infections. In: Proceedings of the International Conference on Nosocomial Infections, 1970. Chicago, IL: American Hospital Association; 1971. p. 247-54.