

Questions to ask Facilities Engineering

STEAM STERILIZATION EXPERT SERIES

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Joel Schafer, CRCST
VP of Sterile Services, LLC

Beyond Clean Steam Sterilization Expert Series:

WHAT ARE SOME QUESTIONS TO ASK FACILITIES ENGINEERING

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AAMI ST79:2017 3.3.3.3 speaks to the requirements of each hospital's Facilities Engineering department, stating that they must test AND document that the steam saturation percentages and non-condensable gasses are within specified parameters. You could always ask to see that documentation.

In addition, you might also inquire as to what they do to treat the water used to make the steam. In order to maintain the boiler and the steam supply lines, special additives are used to adjust the pH, remove scale, etc. Sometimes these additives are harmful to surgical instrumentation.

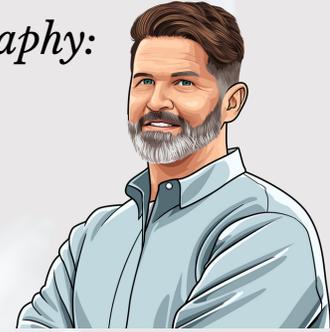
I would also find out where they are collecting their samples from. 97-100% saturated steam with less than 3.5% non condensable gasses is required, but those percentages can be vastly different in the steam supply lines and on the inside of the autoclave chamber.

ST79 does not give guidance to as to where the testing should be done (or where samples should be taken), but since our main concern is the sterilization of surgical instruments, then it would make sense for the testing to be performed in the same location that the instruments are sterilized; i.e. on the inside of the autoclave.

Have more steam sterilization questions? Contact Joel at: joel@hhstx.com

Beyond Clean Steam Sterilization Expert Biography:

JOEL SCHAFER, CRCST VP OF STERILE SERVICES, LLC



Joel Schafer is the Vice President of Engineering and Product Development for Sterile Services, LLC. Based in Houston, Sterile Services evolved from its parent company Houston Hospital Services, Inc. from an ever-growing need for sterilization consultative services throughout the Texas Medical Center. While Sterile Services began in Houston with the Texas Medical Center, the company's reputation has grown beyond Texas and has led Joel into some of the most prestigious hospital institutions nationwide. Joel has over 15 years' experience working alongside sterile processing department staff and management. Growing from an onsite instrument repair technician into a consultative sales representative, Joel was able to personally design and manufacturer Sterile Services proprietary autoclave validation tools, including an inner-lumen sensor unique to surgical instrumentation validation. Joel is CRCST and a founding member of the Houston IAHCSSM chapter. With the increased awareness of the steam sterilization processes, Joel's ambition is to highlight the role of every hospital's sterile processing department and the steam sterilization process.

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