

IS THE ANNUAL PM PERFORMED  
BY MY STERILIZER TECHNICIAN  
THE SAME AS A VALIDATION?

STEAM STERILIZATION EXPERT SERIES

 **BEYOND**  
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Joel Schafer, CRCST  
VP of Sterile Services, LLC

*Beyond Clean Steam Sterilization Expert Series:*

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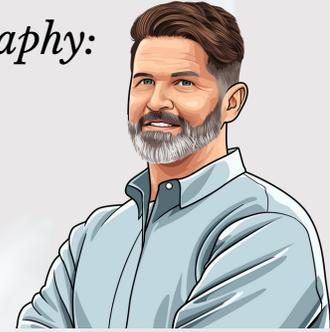
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The technicians who service and repair autoclaves perform many essential tasks that keep our autoclaves functioning and are vital resources for sterile processing technicians. Not only do they repair the autoclaves when they are broken, but they also help prevent downtime by performing preventative maintenance inspections on the thousands of components that make up autoclaves and are therefore able to correct minor issues before they become major issues. After inspection, the functionality of the autoclave is tested by running an abbreviated cycle (typically an air removal test) and the results are documented. Validation studies focus on performance rather than components. General observations may be noted during the study, such as process indicators being stored above the autoclave, etc. The technician performing the validation study does not typically correct these issues, but does communicate with the SPD manager to make them aware. Validations are based on the empirical data collected using precision measuring tools that collect up to 60,000 data points throughout a terminal sterilization cycle. This data is analyzed to make sure that all of the parameters for sterilization are being met as per AAMI ST79: 2017. Validation studies are also helpful tools for sterilizer technicians to use to pinpoint potential causes of less than optimum autoclave performance. Validation studies are not the same as, nor are they meant to replace the annual PM's. They are simply a test to ensure that our autoclaves are doing what we think that they are doing.

Have more steam sterilization questions? Contact Joel at: [joel@hhstx.com](mailto:joel@hhstx.com)

*Beyond Clean Steam Sterilization Expert Biography:*

## JOEL SCHAFFER, CRCST VP OF STERILE SERVICES, LLC



Joel Schaffer 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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