Sterile Processing and AAMI ST79: What SPD Does, Wet Packs, and Steam Sterilization

THE DIRECT ANSWER

Sterile processing departments reprocess reusable instruments through decontamination, inspection, assembly, steam sterilization, and controlled storage under manufacturer instructions for use (IFU), facility policy, and consensus standards. ANSI/AAMI ST79 is the primary U.S. guide for steam sterilization and sterility assurance in health care; a wet pack is treated as not sterile until the cause is corrected and the load is reprocessed. Surveyors evaluate the program, competency, and documentation—not posters.

WHAT SPD DOES IN THE REPROCESSING CHAIN

- The sterile processing department (SPD), sometimes central sterile or sterile processing and distribution, sits between the clinical user and the patient for reusable critical and semi-critical devices. Work flows in one direction: soiled items arrive; sterile, traceable sets leave.

DECONTAMINATION

- Instruments are received, sorted, and cleaned—often with mechanical washers after point-of-use treatment in the OR or procedural area. Cleaning removes soil so disinfection or sterilization can work.

FIELD QUESTION

Where does this come from?

This sheet distills the full Healthcare Facility Hub article linked below, which carries the complete text, references, and sourcing.

From Healthcare Facility Hub - free, like everything on the site. The full article is at the link below.

Caution: codes, editions, and targets vary by facility and authority having jurisdiction (AHJ). Figures marked as common practice are facility targets, not code requirements. Confirm against your AHJ and the current code text before acting.