

5.0 Surfaces and Finishes

5.1 Floors

Treatment areas should not be carpeted. Flooring located under all handwash basins is to be smooth, impervious and anti-slip. The flooring should be easily cleanable and in good repair.

Floors in areas used for food preparation or food assembly shall be water resistant and greaseproof to comply with the Food Hygiene Regulations. Floor surfaces, including joints in tiles in such areas, shall be resistant to food acids (epoxy grout). In all areas subject to frequent wet cleaning methods, floor materials shall not be physically affected by germicidal cleaning solutions.

5.2 Skirtings

Wall bases in Kitchens, all clinical areas and other areas subject to frequent wet cleaning methods shall be made integral with the floor, tightly sealed against the wall and constructed without voids.

5.3 Walls

Other than special treatments included as feature face work in public or staff relaxation areas, wall finishes in clinical areas shall be scrubbable with smooth surfaces and in the immediate vicinity of plumbing fixtures, smooth and water-resistant.

5.4 Ceilings

All exposed ceilings and ceiling structures in areas occupied by patients or staff and in food preparation or food storage areas shall be finished to be readily cleanable with equipment routinely used in daily housekeeping activities.

In food preparation and other areas where dust fallout would present a potential problem, such as clinical areas, supply and storage areas and sterile stock storage, there shall be a finished ceiling that covers all conduits, piping, ductwork and open construction systems.

Ceilings in Operating and Birthing Rooms, Isolation Rooms, Nurseries, Sterile Processing Rooms, Bone Marrow Transplant Units and Oncology Units shall be monolithic from wall to wall without fissures, open joints, or crevices that may retain or permit passage of dirt particles. Light fittings shall also be recessed and flush fitting and sealed to prevent dust ingress.

Acoustic and/or lay-in ceilings shall not be used where particulate matter may interfere with infection control. This will include the following areas in addition to those noted above:

- Operating Unit 1st Stage Recovery bed areas
- Anesthetic Induction Rooms or patient preparation areas
- Intensive Care patient bed/treatment areas
- High Dependency patient bed/treatment areas
- Treatment and Procedure rooms generally.

5.5 Gaps

A gap is defined as a space where two materials do not meet, leaving a space or opening that can harbor dust, germs, mold or vermin.

In the construction of healthcare facilities, gaps between surfaces are not permitted and must be properly sealed. In particular, gaps in the following area are not allowed:

- Between skirting and floor
- Between utility benches and walls
- Between cupboards and floor or walls
- Between fixtures attached to floors and walls.

Floor and wall construction, finishes and trims in dietary and food preparation areas shall be free of spaces that can harbor rodents and insects. Details to comply with the relevant Public Health regulations.

Floor and wall penetrations by pipes, ducts and conduits shall be tightly sealed to minimize entry by rodents and insects; joints of structural elements shall be similarly sealed.

5.6 Surface Materials

Regular routine cleaning of the healthcare facility premises can be carried out much more efficiently if the design of the building is adapted to its function. Unnecessary horizontal, textured, moisture-retaining surfaces or inaccessible areas where moisture or soil will accumulate should be avoided, if possible.

All fixtures and fittings should be designed to allow easy cleaning and to discourage the accumulation of dust. Blinds are preferable to curtains for this reason.

Where there is likely to be direct contact with patients or with blood or body fluids, floors and walls should be surfaced with smooth, impermeable seamless materials, such as vinyl. In equipment processing areas, work surfaces should be non-porous, smooth and easily cleaned.

All surfaces in high-risk clinical areas, including the Operating Unit, Intensive Care Unit, Obstetrics Unit and Neonatal Special Care Nurseries, should be smooth and impervious.