

MONITORING PRIVACY CURTAINS IN THE PATIENT "HOT ZONE"



OR Sustainability Expert

FIRST CASE

KAREN GOELST
CEO & FOUNDER OF KLEENEDGE

First Case OR Sustainability Expert™:

Monitoring Privacy Curtains in the Patient "Hot Zone"

Karen Goelst | CEO & Founder of KleenEdge

Specific guidelines from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are vague in that they advise privacy curtains should be exchanged when "visibly soiled or stained," but little else.

Furthermore, hospitals struggle with finding a process for curtain exchange practices. Should the curtains be exchanged after each patient is discharged? How does the process work in a shared room? Should the curtains be replaced if the patient is in contact, airborne, or droplet precaution isolation?

If laundering or exchanging curtains is based on isolation, how is the exchange monitored? Is the exchange from soiled to clean and fresh monitored and shared electronically in real time? If not, why not?

The fact that the number of curtains found to have MRSA increased over time underscores the need to implement curtain exchange practices that focus on these items. Studies have noted that by day 14, most curtains tested positive for MRSA; these data could be utilized for policy recommendations that all privacy curtains be exchanged around that timeframe. The high microbial contamination by day 21 also suggests that policies/practices should ensure that no privacy curtain goes beyond that window for refreshing, especially in high-risk locations.

Overall studies highlight the importance of establishing firm exchange practices for privacy curtains, regardless of CDC or OSHA guidance. Reducing the risk of infection associated with contaminated surfaces and objects is a critical part to patient safety.

Have more questions for this expert? Contact Karen at kgoelst@KleenEdge.com

OR Sustainability Expert Series™ Biography:

Karen Goelst

Founder & CEO



With a 20-year background in architectural specialties and textiles, Karen Goelst became passionate about solving the issues surrounding privacy curtains following her 15-year-old son's hospital stay with MRSA.

Staying at his bedside she noticed everybody touched the fabric privacy curtain, but the label showed that it hadn't been exchanged for 14 months. Thankfully her son recovered, but this realization started her journey in trying to understand why curtains weren't getting exchanged, when other touchpoints in the room were thoroughly disinfected. Karen founded KleenEdge to ensure this infection risk did not impact other families.

KleenEdge builds its privacy curtain solutions on 4 pillars:

- Protocol software that monitors curtain exchange compliance
- Sustainable cost-saving recyclable curtains
- No-ladder solutions to promote lean workflows and safety
- Patient and staff safety

Launched in 2018, the company received early accolades for its innovative Protocol Compliance Software, receiving AHE's Product Innovation Award, as well as getting patents for the QuickLoad and TeleTrack "no ladder" curtain exchange cubicle track solutions. KleenEdge's solutions have helped many healthcare facilities dramatically reduce operational costs, while having peace of mind knowing that their curtain exchanges are compliant and deliver the highest standard of care for their patient's safety.



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