

Still Stacking?



ASK THE EXPERT

BY NATALIE LIND, CRCST, CHL, FCS, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION—HSPA



Our Operating Room (OR) refused to use a tray because the indicator tape did not change color. All the other packages we sent that same day had changed tape color, so what can we do to convince them that the one tray was acceptable to use?

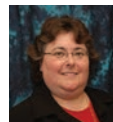
A: If an external indicator does not change color, you should not use the item or tray. OR personnel have also been trained not to open those items. There is a reason the indicator did not change, and the process should be investigated. It may only be defective tape, but a sterilizer issue could also be the cause.

Reference: AORN *Guidelines for Perioperative Practice*, Section 5.3, Verification that the external chemical indicators have changed to the correct color

We have a sterilizer between our surgical suites that can be used for immediate-use steam sterilization (IUSS). Does the sterilizer have to be run with a full load for the first biological of the day? Usually, a Bowie-Dick test is run, followed by a biological. Is this correct?

A: Immediate-use steam sterilizers should have a Bowie-Dick-type test run in an empty cycle daily. Biological indicator testing should be run at least weekly but preferably daily and can be done in an empty chamber.

Reference: ANSI/AAMI ST79:2017/(R)2022 w/ AMDs A1:2020, A2:2020, A3:2020, A4:2020 *Comprehensive guide to steam sterilization and sterility assurance in health care facilities*, Section 13.4, Table 2.



Natalie Lind, CRCST, CHL, FCS, is the Director of Education for HSPA. She has more than 30 years of experience in the Sterile Processing (SP) profession, having served as a technician, department manager, professional educator, consultant and author. Lind has presented SP programs both nationally and internationally and has authored more than 200 SP-related articles.



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