



<p>Team Name: Infection Prevention and Control</p> <p>Team Lead: Regional Director – Staff Development, Infection Prevention &amp; Control</p> <p>Approved by: VP – Human Resources</p>	<p>Reference Number: CLI.8011.SG.005</p> <p>Program Area: Infection Prevention and Control</p> <p>Policy Section: Infection Prevention and Control</p>
<p>Issue Date: July 23, 2020</p> <p>Review Date:</p> <p>Revision Date:</p>	<p>Subject: Portable Fan Usage in Healthcare Facilities</p>

*Use of pre-printed documents: Users are to refer to the electronic version of this document located on the Southern Health-Santé Sud Health Provider Site to ensure the most current document is consulted.*

**STANDARD GUIDELINE SUBJECT:**

Portable Fan Usage in Healthcare Facilities

**PURPOSE:**

To prevent transmission of infectious microorganisms through the use of portable fans in healthcare facilities when fans are used for temporary and exceptional circumstances (i.e., heat waves).

**DEFINITIONS:**

**Client:** Refers to an individual who accesses and/or receives health care related services from a Southern Health-Santé Sud facility or program. Clients may be patients in an acute care setting or residents in a personal care home.

**IMPORTANT POINTS TO CONSIDER:**

The use of portable fans can promote the spread of dust, debris and microorganisms through the air and can pose a risk to clients, staff and visitors. Organisms dispersed through the air can contaminate client wounds, open areas and environmental surfaces. Portable fans can disturb the normal air flow within a room or client care area, altering the expected air flow pattern (e.g., disturbance in negative pressure room air exchanges). While use of portable fans has not been proven to transmit infections, these issues, as well as lack of appropriate cleaning procedures, are infection control concerns.

The use of portable fans may assist with client and staff comfort when all other measures have been exhausted. Portable fans should only be used as a temporary measure (e.g., summer months)

and not on a year round basis (unless there is an exceptional circumstance and is approved by the IP&C department). Portable fans are not permitted for use during an outbreak.

## **PROCEDURE:**

### **1. Alternative cooling methods**

- 1.1 Contact facility Maintenance to review and adjust airflow.
  - 1.1.1 Adjust heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) system in order to achieve comfortable humidity, temperature, and fresh air thus avoiding the need for the fan.
- 1.2 Implement alternative cooling methods:
  - 1.2.1 Use of window blinds (if available)
  - 1.2.2 Cool washcloths, ice packs

### **2. Assess environmental suitability**

- 2.1 Portable fan use is strictly prohibited in the following areas:
  - 2.1.1 Intensive Care Unit (ICU)
  - 2.1.2 Operating Room (OR)
  - 2.1.3 Dialysis Unit
  - 2.1.4 Endoscopy Suite
  - 2.1.5 Medical Device Reprocessing Department (MDR)
  - 2.1.6 Areas used for storage of clean and sterile medical devices/supplies
  - 2.1.7 Laboratory
  - 2.1.8 Oncology Unit or high risk area where immunocompromised clients receive care
  - 2.1.9 Client room where Additional Precautions are in place (Contact or Droplet precautions)
  - 2.1.10 Airborne Infection Isolation Room
- 2.2 Perform a risk assessment on a case-by-case basis for client and/or staff use of portable fans identifying proximity to client care areas.
- 2.3 Prior to implementing a portable fan, confirm:
  - 2.3.1 Alternative cooling methods have been attempted with no success, **and**
  - 2.3.2 The client is in a non-restricted use location, **and**
  - 2.3.3 The use of a fan is determined to be of benefit to the client's clinical condition or well-being AND/OR the well-being of staff.

### **3. Implementing a portable fan**

- 3.1 Use a clean portable fan that has been inspected and approved by the Maintenance Department. When provided by client/family, portable fan must be in new condition.
- 3.2 The portable fan must be positioned so the airflow is directed at the client and must not be placed where the airflow is directed towards the door of the room, or across environmental surfaces. The direction of airflow should be directed upwards towards the ceiling, avoiding smoke detectors.

- 3.3 Portable fans should be used within a single client room, or if used in a multi-client room, within the client's bed space with the curtains drawn (not allowed to oscillate). Fans will not be used in a room containing a client on additional precautions.
- 3.4 The portable fan is never to be placed at floor level and should be positioned to blow at the client's bed level or higher. The portable fan should be placed on a clean surface at bed height or be a stand style fan (not blowing across a dusty surface).
- 3.5 The portable fan must not blow directly on burned skin, burn dressings, open wounds or directly in the client's face.
- 3.6 The portable fan should be turned off during client care procedures (e.g., IV insertions, dressing changes, dressing removal, and urinary catheter insertion).
- 3.7 Cords to be placed to minimize the risk of tripping or falling.
- 3.8 When fans are used in a non-client care area (e.g., nursing station, staff room), direct the airflow within the area to prevent contamination to client care equipment or a care delivery zone.

#### **4. Cleaning and disinfection**

- 4.1 Facility-owned fans:
  - 4.1.1 Determine who will be responsible for cleaning and disinfection on a weekly basis or when visibly soiled, and add to equipment cleaning schedule.
  - 4.1.2 Disassemble and thoroughly clean according to manufacturer's recommendations, ensuring all dust is removed from blades, grill and fan housing.
  - 4.1.3 Disinfect with facility approved disinfectant between client use.
  - 4.1.4 After discharge of the client or when the fan is no longer required, it must be cleaned and disinfected, and then removed to the storage area where it should be covered during storage.
- 4.2 Fans owned by client or family:
  - 4.2.1 Family is responsible to ensure cleaning is performed on a regular weekly basis, following manufacturer's recommendations.

**REFERENCES:**

Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology, Inc. APIC Text 4<sup>th</sup> edition (2014). *Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning*.

CSA Standards Z317.2-10 *Special requirements for heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems in healthcare facilities*.

Saskatchewan Health Authority (June 18, 2020). *Use of Portable Fans/Air Conditioners in Health Care Facilities in the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA)*.

Vancouver Coastal Health (Revised September 2018). *IPAC Best Practices Guideline – Portable Fans in Acute Care*.

Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, Acute Care Infection Prevention and Control Manual. (January 2019). *Infection Prevention & Control Communication Form, Portable Fans – Cleaning and Use Restrictions*.