Standard operating procedure (SOP) · DEN-SOP-001 · Version 1.0 · Approved by the ASF Expert Committee

Supports: 31.1

At a glance

- Only instruments processed in a validated cycle are used (DEN-REG-001).
- Instruments are packed in sealed sterile-barrier packs and dated.
- Every cycle is monitored with the indicators named in this procedure (DEN-REG-001).
- A failed indicator quarantines the load and triggers action.
- Stop and get help straight away if: a load is released for use with a failed indicator, or with no cycle record.

1. Purpose

To make sure every reusable instrument is sterile before it reaches a patient, and that each cycle can be proved (31.1, 31.2).

2. Scope

Applies to	Clinical and support staff in the hospital
Locations	All wards, clinics and departments of the facility
When	Whenever the activity described is carried out
Does not apply to	Activities covered by another document listed in section 15

3. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Clinical lead	The doctor or nurse in charge of the area at the time

4. Background

Dental instruments that are not properly sterilised carry blood and infection from one patient to the next. A validated process, applied to every instrument, is what makes them safe to reuse.

5. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility	Competence
Infection prevention lead	Owns the validated cycles and the monitoring schedule	Clinician or manager
Decontamination operator	Processes instruments and records each cycle	Infection prevention lead

6. Materials and equipment

Item	Requirement	Condition
Records and forms named in this document	Current version	Checked before use

7. Safety

- Stop and call for help if a patient is at immediate risk. Do not delay urgent care to complete paperwork.

8. Before you start

- Confirm the forms and equipment named in this document are available and current.

9. Procedure

Step 1. Clean and dry.

- Clean each instrument by the manufacturer’s method before packing.
- Dry fully so the sterilising agent can reach all surfaces.

Key point: Clean and dry.

Step 2. Pack and load.

- Pack instruments in sealed sterile-barrier packs with a date.
- Load the chamber within the validated load pattern.

Key point: Packed and loaded.

Step 3. Run and monitor.

- Run the validated cycle for the instrument type.
- Record the chemical and biological indicator results (DEN-REG-001).

Key point: Cycle recorded.

10. Decision points

- No decision points in this procedure.

11. Special situations

Situation	Action
Out of hours	Follow the same steps. Use the on-call contact on the wall of the area.

12. Escalation

- Any serious problem goes to the duty clinical lead at once and to the clinical director the same day.

13. Monitoring

Measure	Target	Frequency	Owner	If not met
Cycles with complete indicator records	100%	Weekly	Infection prevention lead	Quarantine the loads and escalate to the clinical director

14. Records

Record	Kept in	Retention

Record named in this document	Patient record or the area file	the period set by the facility’s records policy years

15. Training

- Staff are trained in this document at induction and refreshed each year, with a recorded competency check.

16. Related documents

ID	Title	Use
DEN-REG-001	Sterilisation cycle and load register	Register
DEN-SOP-002	Dental unit waterline management	Procedure

17. Evidence

Reference	Note
E-009	
E-006	ASF Policy Framework v1.2. Adapted.
E-009	ASF Expert Committee consensus.

18. Change history

Version	Date	What changed	Approval
1.0	the date of approval	First version	set Expert Committee approval

E-learning for this document

- **Dental Practice: Five Safety Criteria at the Chair** (AMB-08)

References

- Accréditation Sans Frontières (2026). ASF Policy Framework v1.2. (E-006)
- Accréditation Sans Frontières (2026). ASF Expert Committee consensus on Standard 1. (E-009)

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