

# Glossary

*Specific terms and definitions are provided to facilitate consistency in the interpretation and application of the Guidelines. Some of these terms may have a broader definition in other contexts, but the definitions provided here reflect the use of the terms in the Guidelines.*

**Accessible:** *See* Location terminology.

**Adjacent:** *See* Location terminology.

**Administrative areas:** Designated spaces such as offices and meeting rooms that accommodate admission and discharge processes, medical records storage, medical and nursing administration, business management and financial services, human resources, purchasing, community services, education, and public relations.

**Airborne infection isolation (AII) room:** A room designated for persons having or suspected of having an infection that is spread through coughing or other ways of suspending droplets of pathogens into the air (e.g., tuberculosis, smallpox).

**Ambulatory surgery center:** *See* Outpatient surgery center.

**Area:** A particular extent of space or surface serving a defined function.

**Authority having jurisdiction (AHJ):** An individual or organization designated by a state or government agency to enforce building codes and other regulations related to construction projects.

**Bariatric patient:** A patient admitted specifically for bariatric care or a patient who is morbidly obese.

**Bay (patient):** *See* Patient care locations.

**Bed size:** Minimum rectangular dimensions for planning minimum clearances around beds—40 inches (101.6 centimeters) wide by 96 inches (2.43 meters) long.

**Biological waste:** Waste that contains or has come into contact with bacteria or other pathogens, blood, or body fluids.

**Central services:** As used in this document, a hospital department that provides central sterilization facilities.

**Chemical waste:** Waste that contains toxic, caustic, or otherwise dangerous chemicals.

**Clearance:** The shortest unencumbered distance between the outermost dimensions of a specified object (often a patient bed or exam table) and specified, fixed reference points (e.g., walls, cabinets, sinks, and doors).

**Clear dimension:** An unobstructed room dimension exclusive of built-in casework and equipment and available for functional use.

**Clear floor area:** The floor area of a defined space that is available for functional use exclusive of toilet rooms, closets, lockers, wardrobes, alcoves, vestibules, anterooms, general circulation, and auxiliary work areas. Floor space below sinks, counters, cabinets, modular units, or other wall-hung equipment that is mounted to provide usable floor space counts toward “clear floor area.”

**Client:** A psychiatric patient. For purposes of this document, “psychiatric patient” will refer to a psychiatric client in an inpatient or outpatient facility.

**Clinical sink:** A flushing-rim sink or “hopper” used for disposal of blood or body fluids (e.g., bedpan washing, drainage of suction canisters). This is different from a hand-washing sink or an instrument-cleaning sink (single- or double-sink type).

**Continuing care nursery:** An extended stay nursery that provides care for neonates requiring close observation (e.g., low-birth-weight babies who are not acutely ill but require more hours of nursing care than normal infants).

**Cubicle:** *See* Patient care locations.

**Differential pressure:** A measurable difference in air pressure that creates a directional airflow between adjacent spaces.

**Directly accessible:** *See* Location terminology.

**Documentation area:** A work area associated with or near a patient care area where information specific to patients is recorded, stored, and reviewed to facilitate ready access by authorized individuals.

**Emergency call system:** Devices that are activated to indicate the need for staff assistance. Such devices produce an audible or visual indication (or both) or may be connected or transmit to an area alert monitor.

**Environment of care:** Those physical environment features in a health care facility that are created, structured, and maintained to support and enhance the delivery of health care.

**Environmental services (housekeeping):** Services anywhere in a health care facility that provide general cleaning and tidying and supply identified cleaning materials (e.g., soaps, towels). (While routine disinfection protocols can be included in such a definition, the definition is not intended to include complex, non-routine disinfection procedures or the non-routine disposition of hazardous materials such as potentially toxic drugs or other chemicals and radioactive wastes.)

**Examination room:** A room with a bed, stretcher, or examination table and capability for periodic monitoring (e.g., measurement of blood pressure or pulse oximetry) in which procedures that do not require a specialized suite can be performed (e.g., pelvic examination).

**Facility:** A discrete physical entity composed of various functional units as described in the *Guidelines*.

**Governing body:** The person or persons who have the overall legal responsibility for the operation of a health care facility. Often, the owner is the governing body.

**Hand sanitation dispenser:** A unit that contains a solution that has been approved by the FDA for hand hygiene.

**Hand-washing station:** An area that provides a sink with a faucet that can be operated without using hands. The station also provides cleansing agents and means for drying hands.

**Hands-free faucets:** Faucets that are controlled by knee-

or foot-operated pedals or by motion sensors such as electric eye controls. **Note:** This term does not refer to faucets operated using wrist blades or single-lever faucets.

**Health care facility:** Any facility type listed in the table of contents of this book.

**Hybrid operating room:** *See* Surgical facilities.

**Immediately accessible:** *See* Location terminology.

**Infection control risk assessment (ICRA):** A multidisciplinary organizational process that focuses on reducing risk from infection throughout facility planning, design, and construction (including renovation) activities. The environment, infectious agents, and human factors and the impact of the proposed project are considered by a multidisciplinary team that includes, at minimum, members with expertise in infectious disease, infection prevention, patient care, epidemiology, facility design, engineering, construction, and safety, as circumstances dictate.

**Interventional imaging:** Therapeutic procedures that require radiographic visualization.

**Interventional imaging suite:** A space in the unrestricted area of the building that contains semi-restricted and restricted areas, to which access is restricted to persons wearing proper attire, and that includes peripheral support areas where diagnostic and therapeutic procedures such as cardiac catheterization, electrophysiology, interventional angiography, cardiac stenting, or implantation of devices are performed. *See* Surgical suite *for definition of semi-restricted and restricted areas*.

**Invasive procedure:** A procedure that:

- Penetrates the protective surfaces of a patient's body (e.g., skin, mucous membranes, cornea).
- Is performed in an aseptic surgical field (i.e., a procedure site).
- Generally requires entry into a body cavity.
- May involve insertion of an indwelling foreign body.

Note: Invasive procedures are performed in locations suitable to the technical requirements of the procedure with consideration of infection control and anesthetic risks and goals. Accepted standards of patient care are used to determine where an invasive procedure is performed. "Invasive procedure" is a broad term commonly used to describe procedures ranging from a simple injection to a major surgical procedure. For the purposes of this document, the term is limited to the above

description. The intent is to differentiate those procedures that carry a high risk of infection, either by exposure of a usually sterile body cavity to the external environment or by implantation of a foreign object(s) into a normally sterile site. Procedures performed through orifices normally colonized with bacteria and percutaneous procedures that do not involve an incision deeper than skin would not be included in this definition.

**Ionizing radiation modality:** Imaging or therapy equipment that produces or emits invisible electromagnetic radiation that may be damaging to health (e.g., conventional x-rays, fluoroscopy, CT scans).

**Location terminology** (terms for relationship to an area or room)

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In	Located within the identified area or room
Directly accessible	Connected to the identified area or room through a doorway, pass-through, or other opening without going through an intervening room or public space
Adjacent	Located next to but not necessarily connected to the identified area or room
Immediately accessible	Available either in or adjacent to the identified area or room
Readily accessible	Available on the same floor as the identified area or room
In the same building	Available in the same building as the identified area or room, but not necessarily on the same floor

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**Medication safety zone:** A critical area where medications are prescribed, orders are entered into a computer or transcribed onto paper documents, or medications are prepared or administered. (Definition from the *U.S. Pharmacopeia and National Formulary*, or USP–NF). *Also see Zone.*

**Minimum clearance:** *See Clearance and Clear dimension.*

**Monolithic ceiling:** A ceiling constructed with a surface free of fissures, cracks, and crevices. Any penetrations such as lights, diffusers, and access panels shall be sealed or gasketed. (Lay-in ceilings are not considered monolithic.)

**Neonatal intensive care unit (NICU):** A unit that provides care for medically unstable or critically ill newborns who require intensive interventions.

**Nurse station:** A multipurpose staff work area used by all caregivers in a patient unit.

**Observation unit:** An area usually associated with an emergency department where one or more patients can be clinically monitored, assessed, and treated by staff for up to 24 hours.

**Obstetrical unit:** This term is used synonymously with “labor and delivery area.” It includes areas outside the surgery suite where cesarean deliveries can be performed.

**Office:** *See Room.*

**Operating room:** *See Surgical facilities.*

**Outpatient surgery center:** Any surgical facility organized for the purpose of providing surgical care to patients with the expectation that they will be sufficiently recovered to be discharged in less than 24 hours.

**Patient:** A person receiving medical, surgical, or psychiatric care in an inpatient or outpatient facility. *Also see Client.*

**Patient care area:** An area used primarily for the provision of clinical care to patients. Such care includes monitoring, evaluation, and treatment services.

#### Patient care locations

**Bay (patient):** A space for human occupancy with one hard wall at the headwall and three soft walls (e.g., cubicle curtains or portable privacy screen).

**Cubicle:** A space intended for human occupancy that has at least one opening and no door and is enclosed on three sides with full-height or partial-height partitions.

**Patient care station:** A designated space for a specific patient care function. This term does not imply any structural requirement (e.g., a PACU can have 10 patient care stations of which three are rooms, three are cubicles, and four are bays).

**PHAMA:** Patient handling and movement assessment.

**Procedure room:** A room designated for the performance of procedures that do not meet the glossary definition of “invasive procedure” and may be performed outside the restricted area of a surgical suite but may require the use

of sterile instruments or supplies. Local anesthesia and minimal and moderate sedation may be administered in a procedure room, but special ventilation or scavenging equipment must not be required for anesthetic agents used in these rooms.

**Protective environment (PE):** A room or unit used to protect the profoundly immunosuppressed patient with prolonged neutropenia (e.g., a patient undergoing an allogeneic or autologous bone marrow/stem cell transplant) from common environmental airborne infectious microbes (e.g., *Aspergillus* spores). The differentiating factors between protective environment rooms and other patient rooms are the requirements for filtration and positive air pressure relative to adjoining spaces.

**Provisions for drinking water:** Availability of readily accessible potable water for patient, staff, and visitor needs. This may be provided in a variety of ways, including fountains and bottled water.

**Public areas:** Designated spaces freely accessible to the public. These include parking areas, secured entrances and areas, entrance lobbies, reception and waiting areas, public toilets, snack bars, cafeterias, vending areas, gift shops and other retail locations, health education libraries and meeting rooms, chapels, and gardens.

**Radioactive waste:** Waste containing radioactive materials.

**Readily accessible:** *See* Location terminology.

**Regulated waste:** Waste regulated by federal, state, or local governments that requires special handling and disposal, including biological, chemical, or radioactive waste.

**Restricted area:** *See* Surgical suite.

**Room:** A space enclosed by hard walls and having a door. Where the word “room” or “office” is used in the *Guidelines*, a separate, enclosed space for the one named function is intended. Otherwise, the described area may be a specific space in another room or common area.

**Safety risk assessment (SRA):** An assessment of the potential risks to a patient inherent in each space and building component of the health care project being planned. For each space or component, this safety risk assessment defines the specific hazard’s likelihood of occurrence based on historical data and its potential to harm patients.

**Scrub station:** A space with one or more scrub positions.

**Scrub position:** A space equipped with a hands-free plumbing fixture equipped to enable medical personnel to scrub their hands prior to a surgical procedure. The hot and cold water supply is activated by a knee-action mixing valve or foot control.

**Secure area:** A space to which entry is restricted for reasons of security rather than infection control (e.g., areas where prisoners are treated or where drugs or hazardous materials are stored) that does not have infection control issues but does require traffic to be limited to authorized personnel and patients.

**Service areas:** Designated spaces that house auxiliary functions that do not routinely involve contact with patients, clients, or the public (e.g., supply, processing, storage, and maintenance services such as pharmacy, dietary, bulk sterile processing, laundry processing and storage, housekeeping, engineering operations, and waste storage/holding facilities).

**Station:** *See* Hand-washing station, Nurse station, Patient care locations, and Scrub station.

**Support areas (general):** Where the word “room” or “office” is used, a separate, enclosed space for the one named function is intended. Otherwise, the described area is permitted to be a specific space in another room or common area.

**Support areas (nursing units, diagnostic and treatment areas, etc.):** Designated spaces or areas in which staff members perform auxiliary functions that support the main purpose of the unit or other location.

**Support areas (patient, families, and/or visitors):** Designated spaces for the use of patients, clients, registrants, or visitors (e.g., changing areas, dining rooms, toilet rooms, lounges) or families and visitors (e.g., waiting areas and lounges, children’s play areas, toilet rooms).

**Support areas (staff):** Designated spaces for the personal use of staff (e.g., changing areas, toilet rooms, showers, lounges, dining areas).

**Surgical facilities:**

**Operating room (OR):** A room in the surgical suite that meets the requirements of a restricted area and is designated and equipped for performing surgical or other invasive procedures. An aseptic field is required

for all procedures performed in an OR. Any form of anesthesia may be administered in an OR if proper anesthesia gas administration devices are present and exhaust systems are provided

**Hybrid operating room:** A room that meets the definition of an operating room and is also equipped to enable diagnostic imaging before, during, and after surgical procedures. Imaging equipment is permanently installed in the room and may include MRI, fixed single-plane and bi-plane tomographic imaging systems, and computed tomography equipment. **Note:** Use of portable imaging technology does not make an OR a hybrid operating room.

**Surgical suite:** A space in the building that:

- contains semi-restricted and restricted areas (*see* table below);
- has access restricted to those wearing proper attire; *and*
- includes peripheral support areas as defined in the functional program.

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Restricted area	<p>A designated space in the semi-restricted area of the surgical suite that can only be accessed through a semi-restricted area.</p> <p>The restricted access is primarily intended to support a high level of asepsis control, not necessarily for security purposes. Traffic in the restricted area is limited to authorized personnel and patients. Personnel in restricted areas are required to wear surgical attire and cover head and facial hair. Masks are required where open sterile supplies or scrubbed persons may be located.</p>
Semi-restricted area	<p>Peripheral support areas surrounding the restricted area of the surgical suite (e.g., storage areas for clean and sterile supplies, sterile processing rooms, scrub stations, corridors leading to the restricted area)</p>

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**Sustainability:** A means of configuring human activity so that society, its members, and its economies are able to meet their needs and express their greatest potential in the present, preserve biodiversity and natural ecosystems in the long term, and improve the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems.

**Sustainable design:** The art of designing physical objects, the built environment, and services to comply with principles of economic, social, and ecological sustainability.

**Swing bed:** A patient bed that may be used for varying levels of clinical acuity. The built environment for such a bed must be consistent with the highest level of care acuity planned or provided.

**Treatment room:** A standard patient room in an emergency department (ED) or urgent care center that may be used for a variety of functions, including patient examination and various treatments or procedures, including wound packing, suture placement, or casting. This room may contain specialized equipment as identified in the functional program.

**Unit:** An area or space usually dedicated to a single defined organizational function.

**Zone:** A space in an area or room that is dedicated to a particular function and is not separated from the rest of the area or room by walls, partitions, curtains, or other means (e.g., family zone, medication safety zone).