



**News Release
Healthcare Laundry Accreditation Council**

HLAC Marks 10 Years of Inspecting and Accrediting Healthcare Laundries

PLAINFIELD, IL - October 5, 2016 - The Healthcare Laundry Accreditation Council (HLAC) is marking its 10th year as the leading nonprofit organization that inspects and accredits laundries that process reusable textiles for hospitals, nursing home and other healthcare facilities - based on the highest, professionally recognized standards for patient safety and infection prevention.

"Ten years is a milestone worth noting," said John Scherberger, board president of HLAC. "There have been many dedicated individuals who have been involved in the advancement of the organization and its mission, and in the development and evolution of its nationally recognized standards. We can all take great pride in knowing that HLAC today is an important part of the safety solution in healthcare's ever-urgent effort to protect patients through the prevention of infections."

Scherberger said HLAC-accredited laundries have a "firm and fast connection" with their healthcare customers that gives them an edge over their competitors.

"Because they're HLAC accredited, they can tell their clients they share their patient safety goals, that they've raised the bar on how a laundry should process healthcare textiles, that their clients can have confidence in the laundry's highest of standards, and that their practices are the industry's best and most current available," he said. "It should go without saying that laundries without HLAC accreditation come up short in these comparisons."

HLAC began inspecting and accrediting laundries in 2006 in response to years of requests from textile professionals for an independent accrediting body that would create a program acknowledging that a laundry organization meets the highest standards for processing textiles.

HLAC Accreditation: A Laundry Owner's POV

Reino Linen Service of Gibsonburg, OH, was one of the first healthcare laundries to receive HLAC accreditation 10 years ago and has stayed accredited ever since, going through the required inspection process every three years. Judy Reino is president of the second generation family-owned and operated business, which was founded in 1943.

"Because of our HLAC accreditation, Reino Linen Service has been able to keep pace with the growing complexity of processing healthcare linens," Reino said.

"It's HLAC's standards that make the difference," she said. "These standards cover the complete textile processing cycle, from handling and transporting soiled healthcare textiles, to in-plant processing and delivery back to the customer. They ensure our laundries are built right, equipped properly and staffed with qualified and trained personnel for processing product."

Reino noted that her company doesn't hesitate to communicate these qualities that make Reino Linen Service different from others in her marketplace. "We believe our HLAC accreditation is an important message to convey to current and prospective customers," she said. "It's clearly a competitive advantage."

HLAC's Inspection Process: An Inspector's POV

The HLAC Accreditation process is to inspect alongside its predetermined standards a healthcare laundry's own processes - its systems, procedures, etc. for ensuring that product being shipped from the laundry is clean and free from any danger to the patient. The fee-based inspection is entirely voluntary and takes a day. Inspectors, who are hired and trained by HLAC, are independent contractors who have a wide range of experience and expertise in the healthcare laundry industry.

Thomas J. Fitzgerald is HLAC's first inspector, hired 10 years ago. "The inspection is an important part of the accreditation process," Fitzgerald said. "HLAC inspections place significant

weight on factors such as design, equipment, practices, training, protocols and adherence to regulatory body requirements."

Fitzgerald said the process can be intimidating to some. "In my 10 years of doing these inspections, I've seen the gamut, from laundries that have gone the extra mile to prepare, to those that simply aren't up to the challenge of meeting HLAC's rigorous standards."

He added, "Going through the inspection process should help a laundry to unite its efforts to become a much stronger - smarter and more competent in processing healthcare textiles - and this should enable them to provide their healthcare customers with an improved level of service ultimately benefitting patient safety."

HLAC Standards: An Infection Prevention Expert's POV

Nancy B. Bjerke, BSN, RN, MPH, CIC is an independent consultant with Infection Control Associates who provides consultation services to diverse healthcare practice settings, including program management, onsite assessment, best practice strategies, employee education, and outbreak investigation. Bjerke is one of the original authors who helped develop HLAC's Accreditation Standards [document](#), which was recently updated.

"The HLAC Accreditation Standards are quite comprehensive and were established as the minimum acceptable practice for the preparation of hygienically clean, reusable healthcare textiles for patient care, implemented and executed by accredited laundry facilities processing reusable healthcare textiles," Bjerke said.

"These standards are continually under review and are changed as HLAC learns from experience, education and expertise," she said. "New guidelines and regulations are incorporated so, for example, what was once a non-mandatory provision might evolve to become a mandatory requirement."

Bjerke said she has seen HLAC's standards both expand and contract as the organization endeavors to keep them relevant and focused both on the safety of the laundry workers and the end users who are typically patients but include health care staff.

"Clearly, laundries that successfully meet these standards are, so to speak, the best of the batch," she said.

About HLAC

The Healthcare Laundry Accreditation Council (HLAC) is a nonprofit organization formed for the purpose of inspecting and accrediting laundries processing healthcare textiles for hospitals, nursing homes and other healthcare facilities. Visit www.hlacnet.org and on Twitter [@NewsHlac](https://twitter.com/NewsHlac).

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