

# Glossary

*Specific terms and definitions are provided below to facilitate consistency in the interpretation and application of the Guidelines.*

**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 room:** A single-occupancy room for patient care in which environmental factors are controlled to minimize transmission of infectious agents spread from person to person by droplet nuclei associated with coughing and inhalation. (Such rooms typically have specific requirements for controlled ventilation, air pressure, and air filtration.)

**Ambulatory care:** A defined health care encounter of less than 24 hours in duration that requires direct professional health care support within a specific facility.

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

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

**Bioterrorism:** The use, or threat of use, of biological agents to intimidate a political entity or population group.

**Clear floor area:** The built floor area available for functional use in a defined space. Such area shall not include other defined spaces (e.g., anterooms, vestibules, toilet rooms, closets, alcoves) or built-in equipment (e.g., lockers, wardrobes, fixed casework).

**Cubicle:** A patient location that is used for short-term patient-focused activities (e.g., observation or recovery) and can be delineated by ceiling-hung curtains or

screens. Cubicles should be designed to accommodate patient privacy, mobility, flexible use, and ease of access.

**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.

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

**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 features in a built health care facility that are created, structured, and maintained to support and enhance quality health care.

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

**Hand-washing station:** An area that provides a sink with hot and cold water supply and a faucet that facilitates easy on/off/mixing capabilities. The station also provides cleansing agents and means for drying hands.

**Hand sanitation station:** A dispensing location for a waterless, antiseptic hand rub product that is applied to reduce the number of microorganisms present on the hands.

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

**Housekeeping:** Services anywhere within 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 nor the non-routine disposition of hazardous materials such as potentially toxic drugs or other chemicals and radioactive wastes.)

**Infection control risk assessment:** 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, those with expertise in infectious disease, infection control, patient care, epidemiology, facility design, engineering, construction, and safety, as circumstances dictate.

**Invasive procedure:** For the purposes of this document, any procedure that penetrates the protective surfaces of a patient's body (i.e., skin, mucous membrane, cornea) and that is performed within an aseptic field (procedural site). Not included in this category are placement of peripheral intravenous needles or catheters, dialysis, bronchoscopy, endoscopy (e.g., sigmoidoscopy), insertion of urethral catheters, and similar procedures.

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

**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.")

**Nursing locations:** Departments, units, rooms, spaces, or areas in which patient observation, nursing care, and treatment services rendered involve direct contact between patients/residents and staff.

**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.

**Operating room:** A room specifically designed for the performance of surgical procedures. (This includes most types of surgical procedures but especially those involving administration of anesthesia, multiple personnel, recovery room access, and a fully controlled environment.)

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

**Perioperative:** Referring to patient care and other related support activities immediately before, during, or after an operative procedure.

**Protective environment:** A specialized patient care area that can safely accommodate highly immunosuppressed patients (patients with severe neutropenia, bone marrow transplant patients, or patients with childhood acute AML).

**Provision of 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.

**Restricted area:** A designated space with limited access eligibility. Such space has one or more of the following attributes: specific signage; physical barriers; security controls and protocols that delineate requirements for monitoring, maintenance, attire, and use. (The term is often applied to operating rooms and suites.)

**Sealed (tight) room:** A room that meets specific ventilation requirements and has minimum air leakage to achieve a particular designed air quality, airflow direction, and pressure differential.

**Service areas:** Designated spaces that house auxiliary functions that do not routinely involve contact with patients, residents, 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).

**Subacute care:** A category of care requiring less intensity of care/resources than acute care. It falls within a continuum of care determined by patient acuity, clinical stability, and resource needs.

**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/resident and visitor):** Designated spaces for the use of patients, residents, clients, registrants, or visitors (e.g., clothing change 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 personnel (e.g., clothing change areas, toilets, showers, lounges, dining areas).

**Surgical suite:** A space that includes an operating room(s) and support areas.

**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.

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