Accord Curtains

All about cubicle curtains

What is a hospital cubicle curtain? Insights into the history of hospital cubicle curtains, the reasons why they are used today, and current curtain trends.
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What is a cubicle curtain?

Cubicle curtains are dividers used to help create private enclosures for patients in hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, and other medical facility environments. They are used to create privacy and help protect a patient’s confidentiality. They can also help prevent the spread of infection and disease throughout a facility. Cubicle curtains may be known as hospital curtains, or as privacy curtains.

Typically, cubicle curtains are hung from the ceiling on a track and reach near to the floor. Cubicle curtains are manufactured following strict health and safety regulations.

They are available in various colors and patterns, but according to safety regulations, a cubicle curtain should be made from material that is fire-retardant.

History of cubicle curtains

Before cubicle curtains were utilized a hospital bay, or ward, was one large room. The room was without subdivisions for patient occupancy as seen in the photograph of Royal Hospital, Portsmouth, UK in 1902. Cubicle curtains gradually began appearing in hospitals during the 1960’s.

Royal Plymouth Hospital in 1902

Hospital cubicle curtains in the early 1960’s

Private Cubicle Enclosure

Abstract US 4377195 A

An integral ventilating curtain is disclosed for use with a supporting structure to define a cubicle enclosure preferably of the type utilized for hospital beds or the like. The ventilating curtain is in the form of a fabric constructed of knitted inherently flame retardant yarn materials, and having a first section having a stitch density sufficient to render it sufficiently opaque to provide privacy for the user thereof. A second section is formed integrally with the first section and is in the form of an open mesh construction having knitted stitches of lesser density than the density of the knitted stitches of the first section so as to permit the passage of light and air to provide light and ventilation for the user.

Drawings
Brief description of the drawings

FIG. 1 is a plan view of an integral ventilating curtain constructed according to my invention;

FIG. 2 is a view taken along lines 2--2 of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a front elevational view of a warp knitting machine of the type used to produce the method of my invention for constructing the integral ventilating curtain of FIG. 1; and

FIG. 4 is a schematic diagram illustrating the separate steps utilized for constructing the integral ventilating curtain of FIG. 1 using a warp knitting machine of the type shown in FIG. 3.

Why do hospitals use cubicle curtains for privacy?

In a large room with open bays, cubicle curtains provide a flexible way to divide the room and allow for privacy. In private or semi-private rooms cubicle curtains provide privacy without completely closing the door to the attending nurses.

Although the importance of the environment built for patient confidentiality may seem indisputable, only a few studies have directly examined the role of unit design or architecture. Also, even though the trend in many new hospitals is to build private rooms, most hospital rooms are still specified to have cubicle curtains at the entrance of the room.

Cubicle curtains today

Cubicle curtain design grew rapidly in the 1990’s. According to Interiors in 1997, “Most of the clients who use the products in hospitals prefer curtains that are of superior quality, durable and project a sense of well-being. The products should also be stain-proof, non-shrinking and non-wrinkling, and possessing a tailored, fresh and crisp look with an array of colors and patterns to choose from.” While today's cubicle curtains come in many different fabrics and patterns, they are required to follow strict health and safety regulations.

Resources

http://www.google.com/patents/US4377195
http://www.readabstracts.com/Architecture-and-design-industries/Healthy-floors-Clients-talk-about-cubicle-curtains.html - ixzz3QA1MCB7H

Accord Curtains: All About Cubicle Curtains
How do cubicle curtains relate to disease?

Evidence shows there are direct links to HAIs (Hospital-Acquired Infections) and cubicle curtains. Soft surfaces such as cubicle curtains are porous, and not cleanable by simply wiping. Cubicle curtains can be a common source of contamination given that the operation of the curtain requires the hospital worker, or caregiver, to touch it with their hands.

In a research study from Herman Miller Inc, Patient Rooms: A Changing Scene of Healing it was determined that “administrators have the same goal as the other key participants in a hospital setting: returning a patient to good health. A key part of that goal is to avoid a hospital-acquired infection (HAI). But because patients already have compromised immune systems and staff members work with multiple patients over the course of a shift, it still happens. Back in 1999, members of the medical community were alarmed when they learned that up to 98,000 patients were dying each year as a result of hospital medical errors and HAIs. Since then, hospitals have focused on quality improvement, particularly controlling infections.”

Hospital-acquired infection facts

- 271 people a day, the equivalent of an airline crash, will die from hospital-acquired infections (HAIs) such as Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA).
- “In fact, one in 17 patients will be diagnosed with an HAI every day even though more than one-third of these infections are preventable.” [http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/87452.php](http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/87452.php)
- “In 1993, there were fewer than 2,000 MRSA infections in U.S. hospitals.
- By 2005, the figure had shot up to 368,000 according to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).
- By June 2007, 2.4 percent of all patients had MRSA infections, according to the largest study of its kind, which was published in the American Journal of Infection Control. That would mean 880,000 victims a year.” [http://www.hospitalinfection.org/essentialfacts.shtml](http://www.hospitalinfection.org/essentialfacts.shtml)
A study published in the November 2008 issue of *Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology* showed “In a culture survey, we found that 42 percent of hospital privacy curtains were contaminated with vancomycin-resistant enterococci, 22 percent with methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, and 4 percent with *Clostridium difficile*. Hand imprint cultures demonstrated that these pathogens were easily acquired on hands. Hospital curtains are a potential source for dissemination of healthcare-associated pathogens.” To summarize, healthcare-associated pathogens left on cubicle curtains are transferred to hands and could potentially lead to HAIs.

In an article on privacy curtain cleaning solutions on [www.cleanlink.com](http://www.cleanlink.com), Benjamin Tanner, a microbiologist, immunologist and president of Antimicrobial Test Laboratories, Round Rock, Texas suggested “that privacy curtain contaminants would be reduced if hospital personnel, cleaning staff, patients and visitors practiced better hand hygiene. Cross-contamination also can be reduced if housekeeping staffs properly use disinfectant when cleaning — use proper quantities to achieve a kill claim, adhere to proper dwell times, etc.”

"The greatest deposition of germs on privacy curtains comes from hands when people move the curtains," Tanner says. "The second greatest would be aerosol deposition when someone coughs or sneezes."

From, *Health Facilities Management, Take a hard look at soft surfaces*

Kelly Reynolds, MSPH, Ph.D., associate professor at the Mel & Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health at the University of Arizona, Tucson, says that while there isn't a wealth of evidence that organisms exist on soft surfaces in the hospital environment one would expect that the same organisms found on hard surfaces eventually would end up on soft surfaces.

"Some of the key pathogens are MRSA and *C. difficile*. In the studies we have done at the University of Arizona we have been able to isolate MRSA and general *S. aureus* from soft surfaces," Reynolds says. "One thing we know from other studies outside the hospital is that MRSA in particular is very well-adapted to drying out and surviving on soft surfaces and tends to last longer than *Escherichia coli* organisms."

A number of studies conducted in the health care environment indicate that soft surfaces can contribute to cross-contamination. Still, Reynolds cautions that no clear evidence has been reported that soft-surface contamination directly causes HAIs.
"We've done some studies looking at how easily organisms transfer from soft surfaces to the hand when someone touches that surface. We find that transfer from the soft surface back to the hand definitely occurs," Reynolds says. "It's not as efficient as with hard surfaces but because most of these organisms have a low infectious-dose, transfer efficiency doesn't need to be very good to contribute to nosocomial transmission."

According to a 2012 study by the American Journal of Infection Control “Hospital privacy curtains are frequently and rapidly contaminated with potentially pathogenic bacteria.” This study reported, “Within one week of laundering, 92 percent of hospital privacy curtains were contaminated with potentially dangerous bacteria such as MRSA (methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus) and VRE (vancomycin-resistant enterococcus).”

“12 of 13 curtains (92%) placed during the study showed contamination within 1 week.

41 of 43 curtains (95%) demonstrated contamination on at least 1 occasion, including 21% with MRSA and 42% with VRE.

8 curtains yielded VRE at multiple time points: 3 with persistence of a single isolate type and 5 with different types, suggesting frequent recontamination.”

Materials to help prevent the spread of disease

On the account of linking the spread of disease in a facility through soft surfaces, there are new trends developing in cubicle curtain manufacturing and cleaning. One such trend is manufacturing and utilizing antimicrobial textiles. Two manufacturers that use silver-based compounds as the main antimicrobial are PurThread and X-STATIC®.

PurThread fibers provide a “natural, germ-fighting silver embedded in the core” that provide “unmatched antimicrobial protection and odor-killing power without any design hindrances or production hassles.” A study published in Infection Control Today conducted by the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine “found that standard control curtains were eight times more likely to be contaminated with vancomycin-resistant Enterococcus (VRE) than experimental PurThread privacy curtains which only had one positive VRE culture during the entire study.
Additionally, the median time to first contamination of PurThread curtains took seven times longer than control curtains.”

- “On average it took only two days for control curtains to become contaminated with potentially pathogenic bacteria, while PurThread curtains withstood contamination an average of 14 days.” [http://www.purthread.com](http://www.purthread.com)

X-STATIC® fibers permanently bonded with a layer of 99.9% pure metallic silver “are clinically proven in laboratory studies to reduce bacterial growth on textile surfaces by 99.9 percent within one hour.” According to Karin Mueller, of Noble Biomaterials Inc., “X-STATIC is an EPA-registered antimicrobial agent that uses a proprietary technology to bond pure, natural, metallic silver to textile fibers that are then woven into fabric products such as uniforms and privacy curtains. The release of silver ions will persist for the life of the product and is proven to sustain through hundreds of commercial launderings. This is important because soft surfaces are rapidly recontaminated, particularly with things like privacy curtains, which may be left hanging for weeks or months. X-STATIC will continue to reduce the amount of bacteria on the surface of the fabric while in use, without any action or behavior modification from staff or patients.”

- "MRSA contamination was found in 63% fewer silver-impregnated curtains than in control curtains.” Dr. Tim Boswell, QMC Hospital, November 2008. [http://www.infectionpreventiontextiles.com/](http://www.infectionpreventiontextiles.com/)

**Opinions about antimicrobial textiles**

In a study by Schweizer, et al. (2012), twenty-one rooms in a surgical intensive care unit (ICU) and nine rooms in a medical ICU were randomly selected to receive either a new standard curtain or a new identical-looking CEC (Complex Element Compound) curtain. Fifteen rooms received CEC curtains and 15 received standard curtains. Cultures were performed of samples that were collected from curtains twice a week for 4 weeks (23 days). The median time to first contamination was 7 times longer for CEC curtains than for standard curtains (14 vs 2 days).

CEC curtains were significantly less contaminated than standard curtains according to earlier culture results but not significantly different for later culture results where 14 CEC curtains and 13 standard curtains were contaminated at least once
Antimicrobial textiles have received mixed reviews from the medical community.

In fact, many epidemiologists worry that antimicrobial products are making superbugs more resistant and even stronger.

C. difficile, for example, is a resilient organism that lives inside of spores and these spores are not affected by antimicrobial treatments.

McArthur et al. (2012) have warned that “continued use of [antimicrobial textiles] could result in increased and widespread resistance to specific antimicrobials, especially metals, with an increased resistance to antibiotics. Such increases have the potential to find their way into bacterial populations of human pathogens leading to serious and unintended public health consequences.”

Resources

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hospital-acquired_infection
http://www.cleanlink.com/hs/article/Privacy-Curtain-Cleaning-Solutions--14453-sthash.SSPOXWnw.dpuf


http://www.hospitalinfection.org/essentialfacts.shtml
http://www.infectionpreventiontextiles.com
http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/87452.php
http://www.purthread.com

**How do I clean a cubicle curtain?**

Cleaning hospital cubicle curtains can be difficult. They cannot be thoroughly cleaned in place by wiping down, although it is an option. Cleaning is a task that is easily overlooked. It can be limited by time, manpower, and facility budget.

Care instructions for cubicle curtains are usually found in a tag at the bottom of the curtain hem. Instructions will vary based on the manufacturer and the materials used; however, most cubicle curtains are washable to 160° F with a synthetic detergent. Curtains can tumble dry at 140° F. They should be hung or folded immediately after drying. Most hospital cubicle curtains are inherently fire retardant, meaning the flame resistance cannot be washed out of the curtains regardless of the number of times washed.

One area of special difficulty with a cubicle curtain is the wrinkles. Unless you are set up to handle large pieces of fabric, it is likely that your cleaned curtain will have many wrinkles.

**Different ways cubicle curtains can be cleaned**

1. Curtains can be cleaned in place
2. Hospitals can clean their curtains onsite
3. Curtains can be outsourced to a professional, mobile onsite cleaning service. One example is AWC, which provides mobile dry cleaning units [http://www.awc-cwc.com/services/hospital.asp](http://www.awc-cwc.com/services/hospital.asp).
4. Curtains can be outsourced to a professional, offsite cleaning service such as Accord Curtains [http://www.accordcurtains.com/](http://www.accordcurtains.com/)

Typically, curtains are taken down and outsourced to an off-site professional cleaning service that will clean, sanitize, press, and return your curtains.

**Advantages of professional cleaning**

- Cleaning according to environmental services and infection control protocols
- Professionally cleaned curtains have a neater, more uniform appearance
- Scheduled and managed service that helps determine when curtains need cleaned, repaired, or replaced
- Inventory tracking
- Optional replacement curtains while your curtains are being cleaned
Alternatives to cleaning cubicle curtains

There are alternatives to cleaning an entire curtain like utilizing sanitizing spray disinfectants, or products that offer alternative solutions like the Hand Shield® or Xenex's Germ-Zapping Robots™.

Sanitizing Spray

An excerpt from *Health Facilities Management, Take a hard look at soft surfaces* quoting Kelly Reynolds, MSPH, Ph.D., associate professor at the Mel & Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health at the University of Arizona states that "the use of a disinfectant easily could be integrated into health care practices where the occupancy is high and fast patient room turnaround time is critical. This option is an alternative to other options such as laundering privacy curtains between patients.

Reynolds says tests conducted in the field in a real-time application have shown a sanitizing spray reduced general background bacteria by 99 percent. The next phase of testing the product will involve putting microbial tracers on soft surfaces to get a better idea of reduction on the various soft surfaces that have been inoculated with organisms.

Thus far we have found that the sanitizing spray has been very effective. But I want to issue a word of caution that any sanitizing spray that is chosen for soft surfaces should be EPA-registered for soft-surface sanitizing. That way you can be sure that product has been tested to achieve a 99.9 percent reduction, as required by the EPA," Reynolds says."


One sanitizing spray for soft surfaces is Clorox Healthcare® Hydrogen Peroxide Cleaner Disinfectants. These products “are EPA-registered for use on soft surfaces and kill bacteria on soft surfaces in 30 seconds”.

[https://www.cloroxprofessional.com](https://www.cloroxprofessional.com)

Handhold Areas

The Hand Shield® is a product line that offers an attached handhold area to both ends of a curtain. It is available as either a permanently attached handhold, or as a disposable. Both versions encourage the use of a designated hand-safe zone to reduce the potential for cross-contamination. [http://www.curtaincare.com/the-handshield-overview](http://www.curtaincare.com/the-handshield-overview)
The permanently attached Hand Shield® is made of a heavy-duty healthcare approved material with inherent antimicrobial, anti-fungal, and stain resistant properties. It can be wiped daily in seconds.

The disposable Hand Shield® can be used in conjunction with existing privacy curtains and snap on to a curtain's existing mesh. They can be changed on a cleaning schedule or when a patient is discharged.

**UV Disinfection Systems**

There are even newer technologies like UV Disinfection Systems used for advanced environmental cleaning of healthcare facilities.

One example is the Pulsed Xenon UV from Xenex. Xenex's Germ-Zapping Robots™ use a patented pulse Xenon UV disinfection system that is more effective than cleaning with bleach by hand. The UV light in the robot touches and cleans all surfaces and after five to 10 minutes, the germs' DNA are so badly damaged by the UV light that they can no longer replicate and die.

http://www.xenex.com/

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**Resources**

http://accordcurtains.com/

http://www.awc-cwc.com/services/hospital.asp

https://www.cloroxprofessional.com

www.curtaincare.com/the-handshield-overview


http://www.xenex.com/
What are the cleaning requirements for cubicle curtains?

Presently, there is no consensus regarding cleaning requirements for cubicle curtains. The frequency of cleaning and laundering requirements are determined by each facility. Most facilities will clean curtains when they are visibly soiled, or after an isolation discharge. Some facilities will also schedule curtain cleaning on a routine basis; some may schedule cleaning once a year and others may schedule monthly. According to survey administered by the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC) infection preventionists responded to how often privacy curtains in their facilities are cleaned, 37 percent “only when visibly soiled,” 13 percent “every month,” 13 percent “every three months” and 13 percent “once per year.”

Two expert opinions on cleaning requirements

From OSHA Healthcare Advisor

Q: What’s the OSHA requirement for laundering privacy or cubicle curtains in an ambulatory care setting?

A: OSHA does not have a specific requirement for laundering privacy or cubicle curtains, only that you include the frequency on your housekeeping schedule.

The CDC Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Health-Care Facilities document doesn’t help much, as it refers to window curtains and merely says: “Clean walls, blinds, and window curtains in patient-care areas when they are visibly dusty or soiled.” For a more authoritative answer, we asked Steve MacArthur, safety consultant for The Greeley Company, and occasional blogger for OSHA Healthcare Advisor and more frequently for his own Mac’s Safety Space.

Here is what he had to say on the subject:

I don’t know that you’re going to find very much in the way of guidance because the answer to the question of “how often would one change the cubicle curtains” is “it depends.”

There are a ton of variables, but let’s get the hard and fast stuff out of the way:

Soiled cubicle curtain – change it

Precaution patient discharged – change it (there are probably instances in which changing is not necessary, but it’s not a good practice to have front line environment services staff making the call on whether it should be changed or not). These are probably the most dire circumstances you’d encounter in the ambulatory setting.
The next tier is much grayer; for instance, if a patient is there (which wouldn’t happen in ambulatory, but I just want to use the example) for a month or more, it’s probably a good idea to think about changing.

Beyond that, you can certainly look at the manufacturer recommendations for cleaning frequencies; some facilities do them annually, some semi-annually, some quarterly.

Some facilities rent the cubicles and as a function of that rental, the vendor supplies the labor for changing them out. In situations where you don’t have a complete set to change out, the change is done in phases. Also, some facilities will change them out when a room is empty as a function of being able to access the space.

Of course, then there are the issues of wear and tear—cubicle curtains can get beat up pretty quickly, which also indicates time to change ‘em out.

From AORN (Association of periOperative Registered Nurses)

According to the American Society for Healthcare Environmental Services of the American Hospital Association, privacy curtains should be cleaned any time there is visible dust or soil and as a part of the terminal cleaning process whenever an area has been occupied by a patient who has been on contact or droplet precautions.¹,² To prevent cross contamination, the privacy curtains should be taken down immediately after an area has been occupied by a patient who has been on isolation precautions, and clean curtains should be hung before the next patient occupies the area. Conversely, freshly laundered privacy curtains should be hung immediately before an immunosuppressed patient will be occupying the area.

If the curtains are made from a nonporous material (eg, plastic), the edges are high-touch areas and should be included in the daily disinfecting/cleaning procedure.¹ If the curtains are fabric and there is no visible dust or soil, some of the following considerations should be taken into account for determining the frequency of cleaning: volume of surgical procedures performed per month, types of procedures performed in the facility, patient population, traffic in the area, and the number of visitors.

Privacy curtains should be removed and sent out to a commercial laundry to ensure they are disinfected and free of vegetative pathogens (ie, hygienically clean). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines, “Laundering cycles consist of flush, main wash, bleaching, rinsing, and souring…. The antimicrobial action of the laundering process results from a combination of mechanical, thermal, and chemical factors.”² Adding a mild acid to the final rinse cycle is known as “souring” and results in a rapid shift in the pH from an alkaline level to an acidic level that further inactivates some microorganisms.²
The guidelines also state that large-surface cleaning methods that produce mists or aerosol or disperse dust in patient-care areas should be avoided.² It is not appropriate to steam the curtains and leave them hanging because of the probability of aerosolization and dispersion of dust and the risk of burns to the personnel using the steamer. There also is a risk for inconsistency because the heat from the steam may not reach all areas of the curtain and may not provide enough heat to destroy microorganisms. Steam cleaning would not include the recommended bleaching and rinse cycles.

When purchasing privacy curtains and developing cleaning policies, perioperative managers should be aware of the manufacturer's recommendations for cleaning. State regulations or accrediting standards may dictate procedures for laundering and cleaning cycles. Knowing the fabric content of the privacy curtains is important to determine the method for cleaning. For example, dry cleaning is not considered to be effective in reducing the numbers of bacteria and viruses on contaminated fabric surfaces.² Fabric content also is important because of the tendencies of microorganisms to bind with certain fabrics more than others. One study indicates that Staphylococcus aureus and Pseudomonas aeruginosa can bind to acrylic, polyester, and wool at very high ratios.³ Other studies have shown that staphylococci, enterococci, and fungus can survive on fabric for days or weeks and have a tendency to survive longer on polyester than on cotton.⁴,⁵ A sufficient inventory of privacy curtains should be purchased to allow immediate replacement when necessary.

References:
1. FAQ section: how often should privacy curtains be cleaned?. American Society for Healthcare Environmental Services of the American Hospital Association http://www.ashes.org/ashes_app/learn/in_focus/faqs/privacy_curtains_1.jsp Accessed November 11, 2010

Resources
http://www.aornjournal.org/article/S0001-2092(11)00250-X/fulltext
http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5210a1.htm
What are the fire code requirements for cubicle curtains?

Cubicle curtains must adhere to local, state, and Federal fire codes. Typically there are two factors required:

1. All cubicle curtain fabrics are required to be fire-retardant by National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) code. The fabric may be flame-retardant treated (FRT) or Inherently Flame retardant (IFR,) or sometimes referred to as (FR). Most cubicle curtains are fabricated using fabrics that pass NFPA 701 testing.


Flame-retardant treated fabrics are materials are made flame-resistant by the application of flame-retardant chemicals. Inherently flame resistant fibers are materials that have flame resistance built into their chemical structures.

2. Mesh needs to allow water to pass through from the ceiling mounted sprinklers in the event of a fire.

The suggestion for the amount of mesh is 70 percent openness to allow for ceiling sprinkler water penetration. For the proper operation of sprinkler systems, cubicle curtains and sprinkler locations need to be coordinated. Improperly designed systems might obstruct the sprinkler spray from reaching the fire, or might shield the heat from the sprinkler.

Many options are available to the designer including, but not limited to, hanging the cubicle curtains 18 in. (46 cm) below the sprinkler deflector; using 1/2-in. (1.3-cm) diagonal mesh or a 70 percent open weave top panel that extends 18 in. (46 cm) below the sprinkler deflector; or designing the system to have a horizontal and minimum vertical distance that meets the requirements of NFPA 13, Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems. The test data that forms the basis of the NFPA 13 requirements is from fire tests with sprinkler discharge that penetrated a single privacy curtain.

Resources


[http://ssr-cfm-articles.blogspot.com/2012/02/mesh-cubicle-eyes.html](http://ssr-cfm-articles.blogspot.com/2012/02/mesh-cubicle-eyes.html)
How are cubicle curtains made?

What's the process?

Almost all cubicle curtains are custom made to order. There are usually three different parties involved in the process of making cubicle curtains. These three parties could be three separate companies, or they could be combined together and serve more than one function. Standard Textile, for example, is the largest cubicle curtain manufacturer in the United States and provides all three services. [http://www.standardtextile.com/healthcare/products/decorative-products/cubicle-curtains](http://www.standardtextile.com/healthcare/products/decorative-products/cubicle-curtains)

A vendor receives the quantities and measurements for the curtains by working with an existing facility or by looking at blueprints. Once the measurements and quantities are obtained, they are sent to the drapery workroom. In the workroom the fabric to be used is ordered from the manufacturer. Typically, an architect or interior designer has selected the color and pattern of the fabric.

The manufacturer sends a bolt of fabric to the workroom where the curtains are cut and hemmed to the specifications. Also in the workroom, mesh and grommets are added to the curtains. When the curtains are completed, the finished product is sent to the vendor to install at the facility.

How is curtain fabric measured?

Curtain fabric is measured in square yards. Fabric comes on bolts and is available in varying widths; sometimes the fabric is 60” wide and other times the fabric is 84” wide. There also could be a specific direction to the fabric, but frequently the fabric can be hung in either direction.
What method is used to make the curtains?

Depending upon the pattern of the fabric and curtain length, one of the following two methods would be used to make the curtain.

1. Seam fabric panels to get the desired width
2. Railroad the fabric to get the desired width

What does railroading fabric mean?

Railroading fabric means that if you turn a bolt of fabric on its end and roll out the fabric from left to right, the pattern continues across the roll. If a fabric is railroaded, seams are eliminated so the curtain will have a one piece appearance.

The width of the curtain is cut from the roll, resulting in no seams and the width of the fabric on the roll becomes the drop of the curtain.

Resources


Why is there mesh on the top of most, but not all cubicle curtains?

Question:

• Is there a ceiling mounted sprinkler system in the area of where the cubicle curtains will be used?
• Is there an Exit sign that would be obscured or obstructed when hanging the cubicle curtains?

Answer:

If you answered "Yes" to either or both the above questions, then you are required to have mesh on your cubicle curtains order to meet your local, state, and Federal
fire codes. The Fire Marshall in your area determines this requirement and is the final authority for cubicle curtains and fire safety.

The sprinkler system and Exit sign must be able to perform without obstruction. In the event of a fire, mesh allows the distribution of water from the sprinklers, and all mesh must be fire retardant. Mesh also allows for increased ventilation and lighting in a patient’s room. Usually the amount of mesh on the top of a curtain is 18” to 28” tall.

**Alternatives to mesh**

Two alternatives to mesh at the top of curtains are hanging curtains from suspended ceiling track, or by a drop chain that is attached to the top of the curtain. Sometimes suspended track and drop chains are used in conjunction with mesh. These two methods of hanging curtains will still likely adhere to your local, state and Federal fire codes of not having sprinklers or Exit signs obstructed.

1. **Curtains hung by suspended track**

   Suspended track can be used in areas where there are high ceilings or obstructions that prevent track to be mounted directly to the ceiling.

2. **Curtains hung by drop chain**

   Drop chains can be used for higher ceilings where it may not be possible for floor to ceiling curtains. The curtain track will still be ceiling mounted and the drop chain will suspend the curtain of lesser height.
How do I measure for cubicle curtains?

Question:
What size cubicle curtain would I order for an opening that is 144” wide (left to right) x 96 high (ceiling to floor)?

Answer:
You would probably order a 180" x 90" curtain.

Hint: Usually curtain manufacturers use one eyelet every 6 inches. This is a quick way to measure the width of a curtain.

If you are ordering curtains for an area, it is nice to have as many curtains in the same size as possible to help ensure uniformity. This way when curtains are cleaned or swapped out one curtain will not be a few inches shorter than the others.

What do the numbers in curtain measurement represent?
180" x 90" with 20" of mesh

• The first number represents the width, left to right of the curtain.
• The second number represents the total height of the curtain.
• The third number represents the height of mesh added to the top of the curtain. Fire code requires a mesh header on the top of a curtain when ceiling mounted sprinklers are present, or PVC or beaded chain drops, so water flow is not restricted from the sprinklers in case of fire.

Industry standard is for curtains to be at least 10 percent wider than the track size or area that you are trying to cover. It is best to add this extra width to account for fullness and to help provide privacy.

Typically the height of the curtain should be about 6” to 10” above the floor. The curtains should be at a height to still provide privacy for the patient, but not reaching the floor where they would be in the way for cleaning. For example, mopping the floor.
What are different types of carriers and tracks for cubicle curtains?

Carriers can be made from plastic or metal and are used to hang curtains on track. It is important that you make sure your carriers, also known as hooks, are made for your specific type of track. If not, the hooks will quickly get stuck and the curtain will not operate properly.

Two common types of carriers

- General carriers that use an axle and wheel combination
- Break away carriers are used in prisons or behavioral health institutions, they will break away when a certain amount of pressure is applied

![General carrier and curtain track](image1)

![Break away carrier](image2)

There are many sizes and types of curtain track available. Track can be manufactured from different materials like enamel-baked aluminum and be bent to your facilities specifications around ceiling obstructions or door swings.

Different types of track

- Surface or ceiling mounted track
- Suspended track from the ceiling

![90° Bent track](image3)

![Ceiling mounted track](image4)

![Suspended track](image5)


The following image from [http://www.cubiclecurtainfactory.com/](http://www.cubiclecurtainfactory.com/) shows detailed information on ceiling mounted track, suspended track, and cubicle curtain carriers.
CUBICLE TRACK

No. 1200
Ceiling Mounted Cubicle Track

A general-purpose aluminum cubicle track (1 3/8" x 3/4") ideal for enclosing patient beds, shower areas or anywhere personal privacy is required. 12” radius corner bends are standard. Available in white baked enamel finish.

No. 1100
Suspended Cubicle Track

A general-purpose aluminum cubicle track (1 3/8" x 3/4") designed to be suspended in areas with high ceilings or where obstructions prevent mounting the track directly to the ceiling. The track is suspended with 1" O.D. aluminum tube attached to the ceiling and track with plastic Flanges. 12” radius corner bends are standard. Available in white baked enamel finish.

CUBICLE CURTAIN CARRIERS

No. 12 Roller

The No. 12 Roller is made of a nylon axle, two nylon wheels, a tangle-free nylon swivel stern and a chrome-plated steel hook. The nylon parts are extremely durable and will not rust or break. The No. 12 Roller is recommended for use in the No. 1200 Cubicle Track.

No. 11 Glide

The No. 11 Glide is made of a one-piece nylon spool, a tangle-free nylon swivel and a chrome-plated steel hook. The No. 11 Glide is recommended for use in either the No. 1200 or 1100 Cubicle Track.

No. 20 Breakaway Carrier

The breakaway carrier is made of nylon wheels, body and hook. The Breakaway Carrier is recommended for use in the No. 1200 Cubicle Track.

Resources

http://www.c-sgroup.com/
http://www.cubiclecurtainfactory.com/

Accord Curtains: All About Cubicle Curtains
What are disposable cubicle curtains?

A disposable cubicle curtain is an alternative to the more expensive cloth curtain. Most disposable curtains are made from non-woven polypropylene and are 100% recyclable. Many disposable curtains have pleats, making them convenient because a very wide curtain can collapse into a few inches width.

Disposable curtains may come with or without mesh, and can be fastened the same way as traditional curtains to track. Mesh can be sewn on the fabric or some curtains may have holes cut on the fabric.

What are some reasons to consider using disposable curtains?

- Regular laundering of cubicle curtains may not always be possible and the ability to change curtains more frequently can make for a cleaner and healthier patient experience
- Help reduce the risk of HAIs
- Reduce laundry costs: for curtains in high infection areas such as Emergency Departments, ICU and Burn Units where more frequent curtain cleaning is necessary

According Darrel Hicks, author of *Infection Prevention for Dummies*,

Install disposable cubicle curtains in your patient’s room. The features of this type of curtain over a conventional curtain include:

- Safety-Reduces cross contamination and HAIs, reduces worker’s compensation issues by reducing injuries, eliminates stress on back, neck, and shoulders; eliminates cross-contamination risks for ladders in and out of isolation rooms; assures a clean/refreshed curtain with each new patient.
- Time savings-Reduces changeover time to less than 2 minutes per semi-private room; compact packaging allows stocking product in nursing units to eliminate wait time; anyone (including Nursing) can change the curtains with this system which results in faster patient admissions; compatibility with current ceiling track’s; auto release system can reduce maintenance calls.
• Money savings—Can be charged to each nursing division and stocked to a par level by Central Storeroom personnel; reduces worker’s compensation issues by reducing injuries (the elimination of one fall from a ladder by one Housekeeper could pay for curtains for an entire year!); reduced FTE’s/labor cost associated with changing, laundering, etc. 2 minutes v. one hour; eliminates acquisition cost of current curtains if you don’t have the necessary 30% overstock needed to implement frequent changes; stocks a single SKU and reduces storage costs; faster curtain changes allows for patient admissions (improving patient throughput from the ER); eliminates one more possible source of HAI’s due to soiled curtains remaining in the room from one sick patient to the next.

• Increase Patient Satisfaction & Regulatory Compliance—Faster patient admissions means happier patients and families; maintain patient privacy with consistent curtain length in every room; no torn or yellowed mesh at the top of the curtain; no mismatched curtains; no waiting on curtain changes, HAI’s due to soiled curtains.

Disposable curtains have however been slow to gain popularity in the United States on a wide scale. Interior designers work hard to provide an inviting environment for patients. Many designers feel that the aesthetics of softer, prettier, traditional curtains outweigh the benefits of disposable curtains.

Resources

http://darrelhicks.com/lowering-the-curtain-on-hais
What are some new developments and trends in cubicle curtains?

In addition to disposable cubicle curtains, there are new alternative products to a traditional cubicle curtain. There are also new trends and developments for cubicle curtains, such as the use of antimicrobial fabrics, the use of sustainable fabrics, and cubicle curtains that feature landscape photography.

Alternative products to traditional cubicle curtains

- Snap Panels
- On the Right Track®
- Qwik Switch®

Snap panels

Curtain snap panels, such as Simply 66® [http://www.simply66.com/](http://www.simply66.com/) or Snap It Up™ [http://www.coralfabrics.com/main/coral/index.html](http://www.coralfabrics.com/main/coral/index.html), are removable panels that snap on to a continuous antimicrobial mesh that is attached to existing ceiling track. When curtains need to be cleaned or to be replaced they are simply unsnapped. New curtains are then snapped back on the existing mesh.

Snap panels can be traditional curtain panels or disposable panels. Some advantages to snap panels include:

- Reduce health hazards with cubicle curtains by replacing them frequently
- Reduced laundering costs and savings on installation costs
- Panels can easily be changed without ladders or maintenance assistance
- Go Green – Use less energy and resources with reduced laundering, can be available in 100% recycled polyester fabrics

Simply 66® snap panel

Snap It Up™ snap panel
On The Right Track®

On The Right Track Systems, Inc. manufactures products with “a focus on infection prevention, improved HCAHPS scores, safety, and convenience”. On the Right Track® curtains use a patented track and Hookless® Ring technology which allows the curtains to glide along the track smoothly. Curtain exchanges can be quickly managed and without using a ladder. On the Right Track offers traditional cubicle curtains as well as disposable curtains.

http://ontherighttrack.com/

Qwik Switch®

Qwik Switch® from Construction Specialties, Inc. uses a wand in a locking unit at the end of the track where the ceiling meets the wall. When the wand is turned it unlocks the latch and brings the track down to remove the curtain.

A clean curtain is loaded onto the carrier and then the track is pushed back up the ceiling and locked into position.

http://www.c-sgroup.com/cubicle-track-curtains/qwik-switch

New Fabrics

Many new fabric choices are available to meet demands for decreasing the spread of HAIs and environmental responsibility. Fabric choices can also be geared to the patient experience and provide them with visual therapy. Many fabrics meet OEKO-TEX® Standard 100, an independent testing and certification system for harmful substances on textiles.
Some new fabric choices include

- Antimicrobial
- Post-consumer recycled polyester
- LEED certification
- GREENGUARD certification
- Sereneview® Custom Curtains

Studies have shown that cubicle curtains can be linked to the spread of disease in a facility. Antimicrobial fabrics, or antimicrobial finish, help to combat this problem by inhibiting the growth of bacteria on textile surfaces, reducing environmental contamination on textile materials, and reducing the risk of cross-contamination. For example, Nano-Tex with BioAm offers “high performance spill and stain resistance of Nano-Tex with a safe, non-leaching antimicrobial that controls microorganisms that cause odors”. [http://protectbeauty.com/](http://protectbeauty.com/)

Cubicle curtains can be manufactured following LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) guidelines and be GREENGUARD Certified.

The mission of the GREENGUARD Environmental Institute (GEI) is to protect human health and quality of life through programs that reduce chemical exposure and improve indoor air quality. GEI oversees third-party certification programs that identify acceptable product emission standards and certify low-emitting products.

In addition to the use of antimicrobial and sustainable fabrics, new fabrics are being utilized to help enhance the patient experience with visual therapy. “Views of nature have been linked to reduced pain, reduced stress, and shorter length of stay” according to a research study Patient Rooms: A Changing Scene of Healing by Herman Miller Inc.

An example of fabrics using visual therapy is Sereneview, which has a line of antimicrobial scenic hospital curtains and scenic overheads “that bring beautiful views of Nature to the bedside”.

Accord Curtains: All About Cubicle Curtains
“Sereneview® Custom Curtains feature beautiful landscape photography that draws the viewer into a daydream like state of mind. This releases serotonin, reducing blood pressure and stress, without having to medicate a patient during observation or painful procedures.”

http://www.sereneview.com/

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**Resources**

http://www.cubiclecurtainfactory.com/
http://ontherighttrack.com/
http://protectbeauty.com/
http://www.sereneview.com/
http://www.simply66.com/
Resources


    <http://www.hospitalinfection.org/essentialfacts.shtml>


http://accordcurtains.com/
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hospital-acquired_infection
http://www.awc-cwc.com/services/hospital.asp
http://www.c-sgroup.com/
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http://ontherighttrack.com/
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