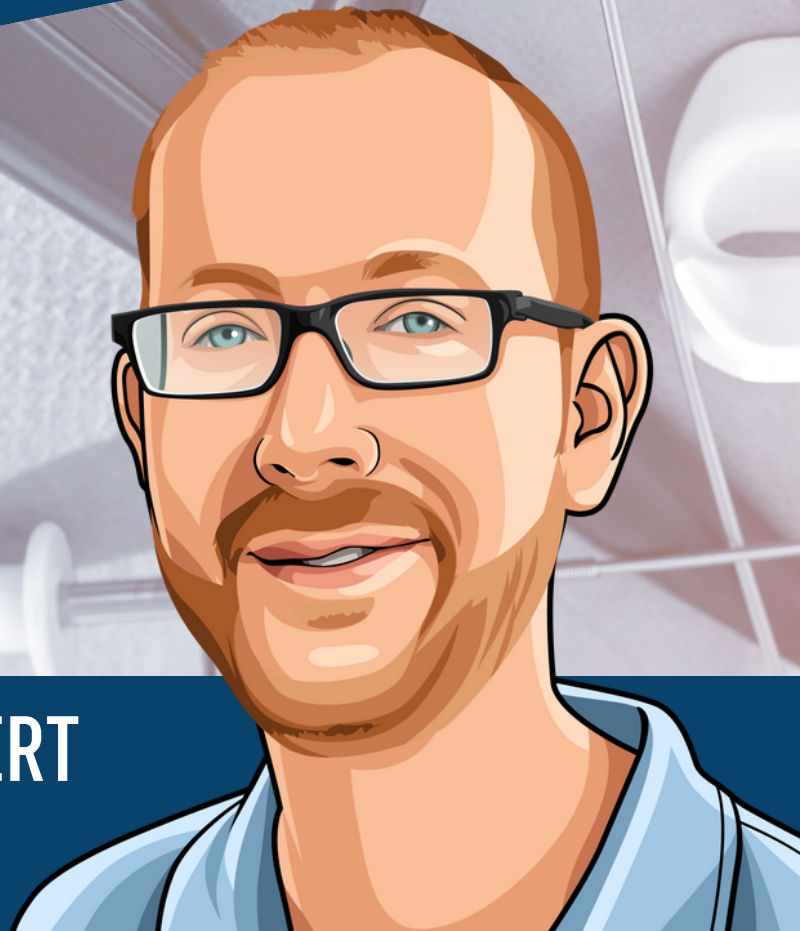




DAMAGE PREVENTION TIPS FOR STERILIZATION & HIGH-LEVEL DISINFECTION (HLD)

FLEXIBLE ENDOSCOPE EXPERT

 BEYOND
CLEAN



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Beyond Clean Flexible Endoscope Expert™:

Damage Prevention Tips for Sterilization & High-Level Disinfection (HLD)

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During reprocessing, flexible endoscopes require some form of high-level disinfection (HLD) or sterilization based on the scope model and your facility's policies and procedures. While AAMI advocates for sterilization whenever possible, it's important to adhere to the manufacturer's instructions for use (IFU) and be aware of opportunities for damage prevention with both methods:

High-Level Disinfection: Most damage happens when the scope is loaded into an automated endoscope reprocessor (AER). To minimize potential damage, you should:

- Be mindful of the light guide connector – it weighs as much as an orthopedic mallet. When this bulky part of the scope hits the more delicate parts of the scope – it can cause significant damage.
- Pay particular attention to the distal tip – which is the most vulnerable and expensive part of the entire scope. If the distal tip is hit during HLD, it can cause damage.

Sterilization:

- The first stage of low-temperature sterilization uses a powerful vacuum in the chamber, which aggressively pulls out any air trapped in the scope. To compensate, sterilizable scopes include a pressure relief valve that is held open by a cap – commonly referred to as the “EtO cap.”
- Not using the EtO cap often results in the bending rubber at the distal tip being completely ripped off, which exposes the expensive distal tip components to the corrosive sterilant.
- Less commonly, the bending rubber may expand like a balloon, but not rupture entirely. When this happens, the bending rubber will shrink back down at the end of the sterilization cycle but not reseal properly because it's been stretched so much.
- Without the EtO cap in place, significant – and expensive – damage can occur to the distal tip.

To ensure your team is aware of these issues – and common types of damage – I recommend the following:

- Ensure that the validated methods of HLD/sterilization are being followed consistently by all staff.
- Educate staff so they understand the importance of following the IFUs.
- If specific tools are needed (ex. EtO caps) – make sure technicians have easy access and that the staff users of the scopes understand the importance of sending caps back with the scope for reprocessing.

Beyond Clean Flexible Endoscope Expert™ Biography:

Michael Matthews

Director of Customer Training and Education



Michael Matthews, MBA, CLSSGB, CRCST, CIS, CHL currently serves as the Director of Customer Training and Education for Agiliti. He previously served as Director of Clinical Education and Training for Northfield Medical in addition to former roles of Territory Manager for the Little Rock, Arkansas area, and a Clinical Education Manager for the southeast region. Before working at Northfield, Michael served as the manager for sterile processing at Baptist-Health Medical Center-Conway in Arkansas. During this time, Michael also served as an Infection Preventionist on a PRN basis to consult on reprocessing services throughout the Baptist-Health system. Michael has previously served as a Sterile Processing Technician at Jewish Hospital & St. Mary's Healthcare (Catholic Health Initiatives) (2012-2013), Baptist East Hospital (2011-2012), both in Louisville, KY, and system manager for sterilization and high-level disinfection at Conway Regional Medical Center (2013-2016). He holds three Healthcare Sterile Processing Association (HSPA) certifications for sterile processing. Michael has also served as a subject matter expert and participated in exam development for HSPA. Michael holds an MBA and has also been certified as a Lean Six Sigma Greenbelt. He has published articles in Infection Control Today, Becker's Hospital Review, Healthcare Purchasing News, as well as several LinkedIn articles in the sterile processing community. Michael is a former cohost of the Beyond Clean podcast, the premier podcast for sterile processing professionals throughout the world.

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