



Practice Briefs

What are the requirements for storing sterile items?

Sterile items should be stored under environmentally controlled conditions, which means a temperature of approximately 75°F (24°C), a maximum relative humidity of 70%, a positive air flow pressure in relation to adjacent areas, and a minimum of four air exchanges per hour. To comply with fire code regulations and reduce the risk of contamination, **sterile supplies should be stored at least 8 to 10 inches from the floor, at least 18 inches from the ceiling, and at least 2 inches from outside walls.** Fire codes specify minimum distances below the ceiling to ensure the effectiveness of sprinkler systems.

Resource:

Recommended practices for sterilization, in:

Conner, R., & Blanchard, J.C. (2013) *Perioperative Standards and Recommended Practices*. AORN, Inc., Denver, CO; 2013:513–540.

ICAP is a cooperative effort of UNMC/Nebraska Medicine and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. "ICAP Practice Briefs" are intended to provide evidence-based guidance on infection prevention issues; check linked references directly for the most current and more detailed information.