

2012

ACCREDITATION APPLICATION AND PROCESS GUIDE

HLAC

HLAC

This guide provides pertinent information for Laundry Organizations seeking accreditation from the Healthcare Laundry Accreditation Council (HLAC). All the rules and requirements in this guide are effective beginning January 1, 2012.



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INTRODUCTION

Leaders in the healthcare laundry industry desired formal recognition for laundry organizations achieving and maintaining the high standards and expertise in processing healthcare textiles. Thus, the Healthcare Laundry Accreditation Council (HLAC) was established in July 2005.

HLAC's mission is to accredit laundries processing healthcare textiles based on the highest standards for patient safety and infection prevention.

The first HLAC Board of Directors was carefully recruited to represent all stakeholders in the healthcare laundry industry including the laundry organizations, their employees and the healthcare facility customer – the patient. No single segment of the healthcare laundry industry dominated the HLAC Board at its inception nor does it today. HLAC is truly an independent neutral accrediting body.

HLAC accredits laundry organizations based upon the 2011 *Accreditation Standards for Processing Reusable Textiles for Use in Healthcare Facilities* as published on HLAC's website at www.hlacnet.org.

HLAC accredits the following type of laundry organizations:

1. Process textiles for healthcare laundry organizations
2. Process textiles for both healthcare and hospitality laundry organizations

Inspections are conducted at the laundry organization and the laundry organization must be in compliance with the *HLAC Standards*. HLAC Inspections are healthcare laundry industry professionals who have a wide-range of expertise in the industry. HLAC provides the Inspectors with in-depth training on the *HLAC Standards*.

HLAC Inspection does **NOT** guarantee accreditation. Each inspection—initial and renewal—are considered a new inspection. The current edition of the *HLAC Accreditation Standards* must be met on the day of the inspection. Even when the inspection of a laundry organization is a re-inspection, accreditation is not guaranteed.

In order to achieve Accreditation, laundry organizations are required to be 100% in compliance with the "**Must**" statements and a minimum of 90% in compliance with the "**Shall**" statements in the *HLAC Standards*.

The HLAC accreditation process is entirely voluntary. Accreditation is active for a three-year period.

INSPECTION FEES

In the table below, the basic inspection fees are listed. Specific detailed information related to the fees and processes are listed throughout the guide.

BASIC INSPECTION FEES (Effective January 1, 2012) (All monies are listed in U.S. currency)		
	United States	Canada
First Time Accreditation	\$5,000*	\$6,000*
Renewal Accreditation	\$5,000*	\$6,000*
Inspection for a Depot (Associated with main processing facility greater than a 10-mile radius)	\$1,500*	\$1,500*
Remediation Visit **	\$2,000*	\$2,000*
* Travel Expenses not included		
** Remediation fees apply when a follow-up inspection is required to review corrective actions		
Travel Expenses	Actual Expenses Incurred billed following the inspection	
Inspection Rescheduling Fee (If rescheduled/cancelled less than 45 days before scheduled inspection plus any travel expense fees and penalties incurred by HLAC Inspector)	\$500	\$500

The **Basic Fee** includes the following:

1. HLAC International Office coordination of the on-site inspection
2. The actual inspection conducted by authorized HLAC Trained Inspectors
3. HLAC Accreditation Sub-Committee reviews the inspection report and makes a determination regarding approval/non-approval of the laundry organization accreditation
4. The following accreditation materials are mailed to the laundry organization approved for accreditation including:
 - A. Certificates
 - B. HLAC Plaque
 - C. HLAC Marketing kit with HLAC Accredited Laundry logos, press release announcing accreditation, etc.)
5. Listed as an Accredited Laundry on the HLAC website (if accredited)

All Inspection Fees (except travel expenses which are billed after the inspection) must be paid in full **prior** to inspection day.

Accreditation is **not officially recognized** until payment for all inspection fees and travel expenses are **paid in full**.

In the table below, special rates are provided for laundry organizations with three or more facilities.

Special Rate for Laundry Organizations with <u>Three or More</u> Facilities* (Effective January 1, 2012) (All monies are listed in U.S. currency)	
To Qualify for the special rate reductions, the laundry organization must submit the following:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. All applications and Inspection Fees for all Facilities at the same time2. Provide proof of common ownership (i.e., articles of incorporation or letter from lawyer)	
The following rate reductions will be applied to the Basic Inspection Rates Listed Above.	
3 to 5 Laundry Facilities	\$500 per Laundry Facility
6 to 10 Laundry Facilities	\$750 per Laundry Facility
Over 10 Laundry Facilities	\$1,000 per Laundry Facility
*For those laundry organizations with facilities in different countries, the country where the facility is located will determine the Basic Inspection Fee.	

CANCELLATION

In the event that the laundry organization cancels the inspection before the inspection date, \$1,000 will be non-refundable plus any travel expenses already incurred by the inspector. If a future inspection is scheduled and occurs, the \$1,000 can be applied towards the future inspection for up to one year from the date of the application.

INSPECTOR TRAVEL EXPENSES

1. The Inspector's travel expenses are billed over and above the Basic Inspection Fee.
2. Travel expenses are billed at actual cost following the inspection.
3. The travel expenses apply and must be paid in full whether or not accreditation is granted.
4. Fees incurred by HLAC to change travel arrangements to a new inspection date will be billed back to the laundry. In addition, an Inspection Rescheduling fee of \$500 will also apply.

REMEDIATION FEE

In the event that sufficient discrepancies exist after the initial inspection and HLAC determines another on-site re-inspection is necessary for accreditation, a \$2,000 remediation fee plus travel expenses will apply. The laundry organization is responsible for the remediation fee and travel expenses.

HLAC INSPECTORS

The Inspector is an independent contractor, not an HLAC employee. HLAC disclaims any responsibility for any action taken by the Inspector while at the Applicant's laundry organization. The Applicant understands that only HLAC, not the Inspector, is authorized to determine that a laundry organization qualifies for accreditation.

HLAC Inspectors cannot serve as consultants for facilities being inspected nor providing guidance and/or education regarding accreditation. This education and/or consultation would create a conflict of interest for HLAC.

ACCREDITATION PROCESS

1. Prior to sending the Accreditation application and payment to HLAC, the laundry organization should download the **2011 Accreditation Standards for Processing Reusable Textiles for Use in Healthcare Facilities** from the HLAC website, www.hlacnet.org.
2. The new **2011 Standards** are organized in such a way that it is a built-in checklist. Laundry organizations can use these **Standards** to conduct their own assessments in preparation for HLAC inspection to determine if they are ready for the inspection process.
3. **New applicants** will be contacted by the Inspector to schedule the inspection.
4. **New applicants** should inform HLAC if there are any days the laundry organization is not open including weekends and federal holidays.
5. **Reaccreditation** – Laundry Organizations due for reaccreditation can be inspected at any time during the following timeframe: 60 days prior to and 30 days after the ending date of their current accreditation. HLAC should be informed regarding any days the laundry organization is not open including weekends and federal holidays.
6. **State and Other Local Information** - HLAC will review evidence that policies are in place to ensure compliance with state and local regulations. Please disclose state or local requirements; attach additional sheets, if necessary. Examples include Title 22 (California), waste water discharge compliance, air quality monitoring and permits, Department of Homeland Security compliance. Please provide the internet address to access the documents for reference if possible. Attach extra sheets to this application as necessary.
7. **Multi-Plant Laundry Organizations** - Companies which own several facilities often use the same template documentation for each plant as a means to standardize. **NOTE:** Documentation must be **specific** (i.e., modified with the name of the laundry) for each individual laundry organization.
8. After HLAC Inspection, the Inspection report is submitted to the Accreditation Sub-Committee.
9. The Accreditation Sub-Committee reviews the Inspection report and subsequently grants approval/non-approval to the inspected laundry organization.
10. If approved, the laundry organization is provided with certificate, plaque and an HLAC Marketing Kit. The laundry organization is listed as an HLAC Accredited Laundry on the HLAC website.
11. If not approved, HLAC addresses the results and the discrepancies in the letter to the laundry organization.

REMEDATION PROCEDURES

HLAC will send a formal letter to the laundry organization with the results of the inspection. If the inspection results do not qualify the laundry organization for accreditation, HLAC's letter to the laundry organization will state that accreditation is not being granted.

1. The laundry organization will have up to 15 business days from the date of the HLAC inspection results letter to correct the discrepancies. In special circumstances, the Accreditation Sub-Committee may provide the laundry organization up to 45 days to remediate based on the extent of the corrections. Time beyond the 15 business days is **not** unilaterally provided to all laundries that need to make changes.
2. The laundry organization will submit documentation of the correction(s) implemented to the HLAC Accreditation Sub-Committee. The Accreditation Sub-Committee and the inspector who conducted the inspection will review the corrections implemented, considering any new documentation. This process may include a telephone conference to garner more details and, at the discretion of the Accreditation Sub-Committee, may require a follow-up inspection.
3. Pictures or videos will **NOT** be accepted for functional separation and airflow deficiencies.

4. Inspection failures for functional separation or airflow issues will require an automatic re-inspection which will be an expense incurred by the laundry organization.
5. Upon receipt of the corrections or the result of a follow-up visit, the Accreditation Sub-Committee will decide whether or not the laundry organization meets accreditation standards.
6. If a follow-up inspection is required, the laundry organization is responsible for paying an additional \$2,000 for the remediation process along with the inspector travel costs.
7. If the laundry organization fails to demonstrate that it has corrected the discrepancies within the 15 business days from the original inspection date or if granted in special circumstances the extended period of 45 days, accreditation will not be granted. No extensions are granted beyond the 15 business days remediation or, if allowed, the 45-day remediation process. The laundry organization will require another physical inspection to become qualified.
8. If the Inspector finds non-compliance in areas previously inspected as he walks through the laundry organization during the re-inspection, those non-compliant discrepancies will count against the laundry organization receiving accreditation.
9. If the laundry organization does not agree with the HLAC remediation determination, it has the right to appeal. The laundry organization must pay a fee of \$1,000 to cover the costs of the Appeals process which is non-refundable. Please refer to the Appeal's Process.
10. After an appeal, if the laundry organization does not attain HLAC accreditation, the laundry organization cannot re-apply for accreditation for a period of six months.

RE-INSPECTION

In the event that sufficient discrepancies exist after the initial inspection and/or remediation and HLAC determines another onsite re-inspection is necessary for accreditation, a \$2,000 remediation fee plus travel expenses will apply. The laundry organization is responsible for the remediation fee and travel expenses.

The re-inspection will be comprised of reviewing items identified as being out of compliance during the initial inspection. If the Inspector finds non-compliance in areas previously inspected as he walks through the laundry organization during the re-inspection, those non-compliant discrepancies will count against the laundry organization receiving accreditation. If the plant fails to demonstrate that it has corrected the discrepancies, accreditation will be denied and the laundry organization must wait six months before reapplying for HLAC Accreditation.

An inspection will be scheduled within 45 days of receipt of the remediation fee received at HLAC.

LAUNDRY ORGANIZATION CHANGES - SELF-DISCLOSURE / MID-TERM INSPECTION

In the event the laundry organization undergoes a major expansion, construction and/or renovation (i.e., infrastructure versus capacity increase) the laundry organization agrees to self-disclose such information to HLAC for the purposes of confirming the laundry organization continues to meet **HLAC Standards**. Such disclosure may initiate a mid-term inspection, and HLAC may choose to re-inspect the laundry organization for this or any other rational reason during the three-year accreditation period. A \$2,000 re-inspection fee plus travel expenses will apply.

LOSS OF HLAC ACCREDITATION

The following outlines the situations that can result in a loss of HLAC Accreditation:

1. Failure to apply and submit fee for reaccreditation
2. Failure to satisfactorily correct deficiencies either in remediation and/or on another re-inspection.
3. Failure to notify HLAC of major construction/renovation that affects process during the accreditation period.
4. Failure to comply with **HLAC Standards** during the three-year accreditation period.

THE APPEALS PROCESS

HLAC recognizes that any laundry organization, which has failed to meet **Accreditation Standards** or which has had their accreditation withdrawn or suspended, should have the right to an appeals process.

1. If a laundry organization fails to meet **Accreditation Standards** or HLAC withdraws accreditation, the HLAC Executive Director will contact the laundry organization within 30 business days of the inspection informing the laundry organization of the decision, the reasons for the failure, and reminding the laundry organization of the right of appeal.
2. The Laundry organization must submit an appeal **within 15 business days** of receipt of the notification of the Accreditation Sub-Committee's decision. If the appeal is made by an accredited laundry organization, then accreditation will remain in force until the appeals process is completed. The laundry organization must also pay a non-refundable fee of \$1,000 to cover the costs of the Appeals Process as well as a re-inspection fee of \$2,000, if re-inspection is required.
3. A laundry organization wishing to appeal the ruling of the Accreditation Sub-Committee denying accreditation for whatever reason, may request a hearing by the HLAC Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee will be comprised of Accreditation Sub-Committee members, the original inspector and an inspector who was not involved in the original inspection.
4. The appellant should submit a statement notifying HLAC of their intent to appeal, stating the grounds for the appeal and any relevant additional documentation. The Appeals Committee will meet and report back to the appellant within 15 business days after receipt of the appeal.
5. The Appeals Committee may decide to:
 - A. Dismiss the appeal, or
 - B. Order a new inspection of the laundry organization at its own expense; or,
 - C. Instruct the Accreditation Sub-Committee to grant or restore accreditation.
6. The Appeals Committee Chair will submit a report on the outcome of the meeting to the HLAC Chair and Executive Director, providing grounds for the decision and making any other recommendations, which the Accreditation Sub-Committee should consider.
7. At this stage, the laundry organization has no further rights of appeal. The Appeals Committee decision is final and the laundry organization cannot apply for accreditation for a period of six months after the Appeals Committee decision.

HLAC ACCREDITATION “FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS”

1. Where do I send the application for inspection and fee?

HLAC has a lockbox address where all applications for inspection and fees should be sent. The address appears below:

HLAC
P.O. Box 777014
7014 Solution Center
Chicago, IL 60677-7000

2. Is there a window of opportunity that is available to a previously-accredited laundry to apply for and expect inspection for reaccreditation?

Yes, HLAC has established a **60-day** before and a **30-day** after the anniversary of your initial accreditation date as the window of opportunity. Anytime within that **90-day** period is permitted for inspection. After passing the inspection, the actual re-accreditation date will remain consistent with your original accreditation date, despite the timing of your inspection and notification. If inspection is not completed within the **90-day** period, the laundry organization will lose its accreditation, receive a letter from HLAC that it is no longer accredited and its name will be removed from the HLAC website. **Accreditation extensions are NOT allowed.** When the laundry organization does become accredited in the future, it will be considered a new accreditation inspection.

3. What if I do not have all of the documentation that is required?

Read the **Accreditation Standards** and make a list of the required documentation to satisfy the inspection. Consult with accredited laundry organizations listed on the HLAC website to receive additional clarification.

4. What if we have documents in another building?

If you store documents in a separate building from the one that will be inspected, bring representative documents to the laundry organization (e.g. training and other personnel files) so the inspector can review them. Blank forms or templates are not accepted as evidence of recordkeeping.

5. How do I know I am ready for the inspection?

You are ready when you and your staff are satisfied that all items in the **HLAC Standards** are addressed and that you have all of the required documents. One way to check your readiness is to run a “mock” inspection with all personnel involved. Another effective method is to partner with the healthcare facility's Infection Preventionists to conduct an assessment with the **2011 HLAC Accreditation Standards**.

6. What personnel at my laundry organization should be involved in the actual inspection?

The HLAC inspector requests that one person be designated as the principal contact for the inspection, especially for the walk-through of the laundry organization. Other staff personnel who have prepared for the inspection are welcome to accompany the inspection party. Staff that worked on the documentation should be present during that portion of the inspection.

7. What personnel at the laundry organization should be prepared for the inspection?

All employees working with healthcare textiles should be prepared to be asked a question by the HLAC Inspector regarding either the work they are doing or safety procedures.

8. How long will the HLAC Inspector be at my laundry organization?

Typically, the HLAC inspector arrives about 8:00 a.m. and begins the physical walk-through. Then he reviews the documentation in a conference room or office. Most inspections are completed in one day.

9. What is the background of the HLAC Inspectors?

Each HLAC inspector is a career professional in the healthcare industry with extensive experience in laundry operations. If you feel there may be a conflict with an Inspector due to a personal or professional relationship, please disclose this to the HLAC Executive Director.

10. What if my laundry organization has a Depot (Associated with the main processing facility)?

The laundry organization must inform HLAC if it has a Depot (exact address) and proximity (mileage to the main laundry organization's location) prior to the inspection. If the Depot associated with the main processing facility is greater than a 10-mile radius, the laundry organization will be required to pay an addition fee of \$1,500.

11. When will I learn if my laundry organization passed or failed the inspection?

The HLAC office will contact you within 15 business days of the inspection to report on the inspection outcome. If any discrepancies need to be resolved, they will be explained in detail. The official accreditation letter, plaque, and media kit will be sent as soon as feasible once inspector travel fees are paid in full.

12. I have an older laundry organization; does that mean I cannot pass the inspection?

The **Accreditation Standards** do not speak to the age of the laundry organization, only to the processes, policies, and procedures used. There is no reason an older laundry organization cannot pass.

13. Do I need to have all of the policies and procedures identified in the HLAC Standards in place before the inspection?

Yes. Your staff should have assembled all of the documents in one location or set of books ahead of time so the HLAC Inspector can quickly and easily review them.

14. Do you have copies or examples of documents, such as quality control programs, contingency plans, and emergency action plans that can be accessed and used to write facility documents?

HLAC does not offer templates or examples of the required documents. The local laundry organization may use any form or format. Content is the most essential and must address the required elements and be current.

15. What questions will the HLAC Inspector ask my production workers?

Common questions concern safety and hygiene issues. For example, “Where is the nearest emergency eye wash fountain?” or “What should you do if you get a needle-stick?”

16. How do I prepare my production workers for these questions?

A sound training program will cover everything an Inspector might ask. Follow this instruction with a rehearsal inspection where the worker must be queried on a question that the HLAC inspector may ask them during the HLAC inspection.

Important Note: The laundry organization must be processing healthcare textiles at the time the Inspector is on site. If the laundry organization does not process a majority or 100% healthcare and is a mixed laundry organization, it must list the hours for processing healthcare textiles when submitting the HLAC application. If the laundry organization is a mixed plant, it must abide by **HLAC Standards** when processing all textiles.

17. What if a new laundry organization applicant or a previously-accredited laundry organization does not pass the inspection?

The laundry will have **15 business days** from the date on the results-notification letter to correct any discrepancies that are serious or numerous enough to prevent accreditation. HLAC will work together with you to clarify what is expected in order to achieve accreditation.

18. What if the laundry organization needs additional time to make the corrections?

In special circumstances, the Accreditation Sub-Committee may provide the laundry organization up to 45 days to remediate. This is a decision by the Accreditation Sub-Committee based on the extent of the corrections to be made. Time beyond the 15 business days is **not** unilaterally provided to all laundry organizations that need to make changes.

19. Are there any costs involved with remediation (corrections)?

If HLAC deems it is necessary for a follow-up inspection to review the corrections instituted, the laundry organization will be required to pay a remediation fee of \$2,000 for the re-inspection along with inspector’s travel costs.

20. What happens if corrections/remediation is not completed within the 15 business days or, if granted, the 45 days?

If the plant fails to demonstrate that it has corrected its discrepancies within the 15 business day period or, if granted, the 45 days, the accreditation will **NOT** be approved. No extensions are provided after the 15 business day period or, if granted, the 45 day remediation process has elapsed. The laundry organization’s accreditation will be withdrawn or suspended.

21. When can my laundry organization be re-inspected after it failed remediation?

If the laundry organization still does not achieve HLAC accreditation, the laundry organization cannot re-apply for accreditation until six months from the initial application date.

22. What if my laundry organization does not agree with the remediation determination by the Accreditation Sub-Committee?

If the laundry organization does not agree with the HLAC remediation determination made by the Accreditation Sub-Committee, it has 15 business days after receipt of failure notification to submit an appeal. If the appeal is made by an accredited laundry organization, then accreditation will remain in force until the Appeals Process is completed.

23. Are costs involved in the Appeals Process?

The Laundry must pay a fee of \$1,000 to cover the costs of the Appeals process which is non-refundable plus a remediation fee for the re-inspection (if required) of \$2,000 plus the inspector's travel expenses.

24. If the laundry organization loses its appeal, is there any other recourse of action?

At this stage, the laundry organization has no further rights of appeal. The Appeals Committee decision is final and the laundry cannot apply for accreditation for a period of six months after the decision.

For further information contact the:

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