

A smiling woman in blue scrubs is holding a small, long-haired dog. The background is a blurred clinical setting.

Miele



PAWS for thought

A guide to best practice
laundry procedures for
infection control

Why laundry matters when it comes to infection control

Mud, blood, faeces, saliva, vomit, and fleas are all an inevitable part of day to day working life for vets. And as a result, the spread of infection through cross contamination poses a very real threat.

Making the time to routinely follow strict procedures on cleanliness and hygiene and ensuring these practices are carried out effectively between each patient is essential in the fight against infection.

For any busy working practice it's often difficult to find the time to review your infection control procedures and consider what you could do better or

differently. And, as a result, it's also easy to overlook the importance of your laundry processes as part your infection control practices.

Nasty micro-organisms which could cause MRSA or other potentially harmful viruses can live and spread on scrubs, animal bedding, towels or staff uniforms. How these items are handled and

washed at your practice should therefore be carefully considered and form a key part of your infection control procedures.

The type of machine you use and the temperature you wash items at is crucial when it comes to ensuring harmful infections are completely eradicated during the laundry process.

How this guide can help you

As one of the world's leading providers of commercial washing appliances serving many vet practices, we understand the challenges you face when it comes to laundry best practice.

This PAWS for thought guide considers some of the challenges and shares best practice guidelines for ensuring infectious diseases are eradicated during the laundry process.

The guide looks at:

- ✓ **Best practice laundry procedures for infection control – four key steps**
- ✓ **The differences between commercial or domestic washing machines**
- ✓ **Our survey with 100 vets – what they told us about their laundry practices**
- ✓ **Key considerations for choosing a new washing machine**
- ✓ **Laundry best practice in action**
- ✓ **An introduction to Miele**

Did you know?

Health guidelines state that to kill bacteria, contaminated laundry should be washed at or above:

65°C for at least **10 minutes** or **71°C** for at least **3 minutes** or **82°C** for at least **1 minute**

Can you guarantee that your washing machine can reach these temperatures and maintain them for this length of time?

Domestic washing machines are ineffective at killing infectious diseases yet almost half of the vets we recently surveyed use one in their practices on a daily basis.

The Water Regulations Advisory Scheme (WRAS) Category 5 regulations applies to all health care organisations, including vets, yet only 9% of the practices we surveyed claim to be compliant with the guidelines.

Four steps to best practice laundry for vets

Vet nurses or other practice employees would no doubt much rather spend the working day caring for poorly pets than attending to the practice's laundry. That's why it's vital that laundry best practice needs to be quick, easy to follow and effective at warding off unwelcome bacteria.

We recommend the PAWS approach to laundry in veterinary care. A simple but effective four step approach:

1

Protect



Using disposable gloves and aprons when handling contaminated linen will **help you to protect yourself and stop the spread of infection.**

2

Attention



Make sure soiled and clean laundry is **stored in different places** and infected bedding, towels or scrubs are **washed separately to prevent cross contamination.**

3

Wash



Using a commercial machine rather than a domestic one allows you to **wash at the high temperatures required to kill to infections.**

4

Safeguard



After washing, dry laundered items in a tumble dryer to **ensure any remaining bacteria is killed.**

The differences between commercial and domestic washing machines

A washing machine's a washing machine right? Wrong!

Any linen used in a health and social care environment that comes into contact with any type of bodily fluid or faeces needs to be washed at high temperatures to ensure any infection is killed.

But domestic washing machines are ineffective when it comes to infection control. They are not built for this purpose, compared to commercial washing machines that have a dedicated disinfection programme to ensure bacteria is killed during the laundry cycle.

There are a host of additional benefits that come with commercial washing machines too:



Commercial



Domestic

Built to handle large loads, Miele commercial machines are **tested to last over 30,000 cycles** – that's the equivalent of eight cycles a day, seven days a week for over 10 years.

Busy practices have a lot of washing to contend with on a daily basis and these models are just **not built to handle large loads**.

Miele Little Giants can **wash and dry 6.5kg of laundry in just 85 minutes**.

Time is a precious commodity for busy veterinary nurses so the less of it spent on laundry the better. The **cycle times on these models take considerably longer**.

Robust and reliable, these machines are built to last and are **regularly serviced and maintained by experts** to ensure minimal down time for busy practices.

Not built for use in a commercial environment, these machines are far more likely to be prone to **breakdown** due to frequency of use and the types of items that are being washed.

Commercial machines feature **dump valves that ensure that waste flows straight down the drain** and not around the pipes, helping to eliminate contaminated water and animal fur.

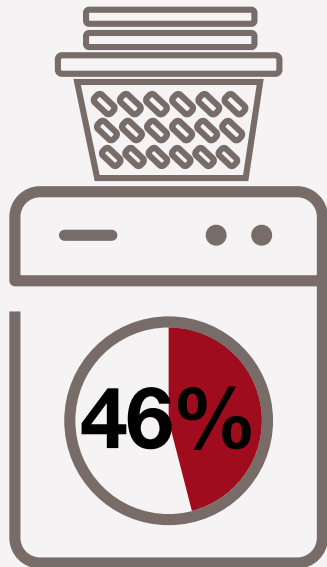
Domestic models can easily become clogged up with animal hair, causing the machine to **breakdown**.

WRAS regulation stipulates that any Category 5 fluids (faecal matter, animal waste or pathogens) could be a serious hazard to health and any waste water should not be allowed to backflow and contaminate fresh water supplies. Miele Little Giants are **WRAS compliant** and have an air gap to ensure the machine's water cannot flow back into the mains water supply.

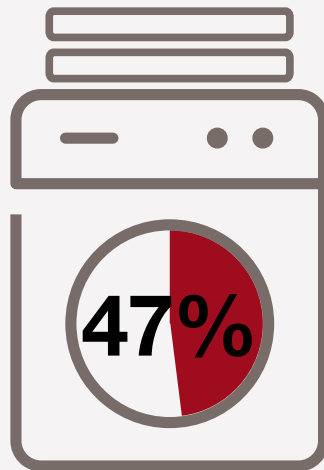
Domestic washing machines **do not comply with WRAS guidelines**.

Our **survey** said...

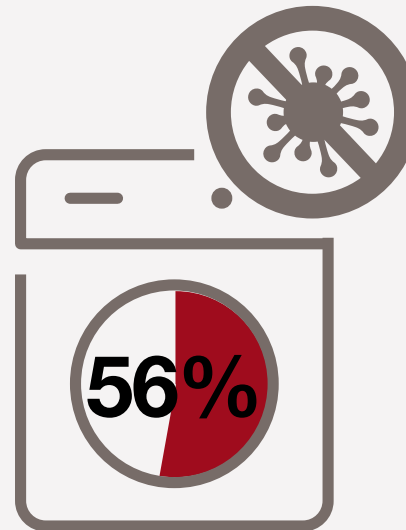
We recently surveyed 100 UK vets to find out more about their laundry procedures and what their biggest concerns are when it comes to infection control.



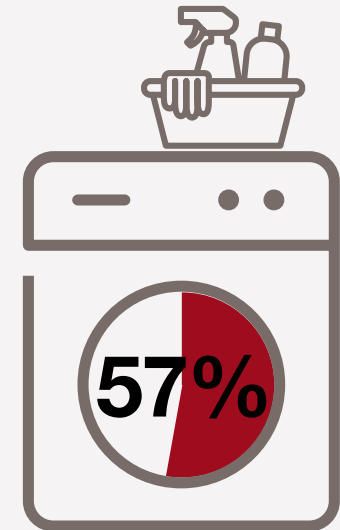
of vets have a domestic washing machine



of vets have a domestic tumble dryer



of vets believe that their current washing machine is effective at killing infectious diseases



of vets believe their practice could do more to prevent the spread of infection

Key considerations for choosing a new washing machine



Cost



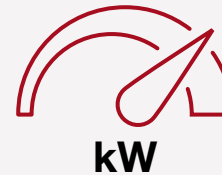
When you're looking for a new washing machine, domestic machines may seem like the most economically viable option. However, commercial models are built to last and handle large loads on a frequent basis. Therefore, **the lifetime cost comparison of commercial machines is better than domestic models.**

Space



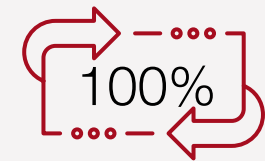
There's a common misconception that commercial washing machines will take up too much space. However, Miele's Little Giants are specifically designed to handle large loads, and as the name suggests they are only slightly bigger than the average domestic model. What's more, they can be stacked together with a tumble dryer to make the most of laundry space available, **taking up less than 1m².**

Water & Energy Usage



Commercial washing machines are also designed to be very efficient on water and energy usage, meaning that running costs could be less in the future. Miele Professional machines are known for maximum efficiency and using no more water, energy or detergents than are absolutely necessary.

Water Technology List



Did you know that some commercial equipment has the added benefit of giving businesses tax breaks to offset the cost of a new machine? If you're considering investing in a new washing machine, look for one that's on the **Government-backed Water Technology List**. Any business that purchases or already uses a machine on this list can **claim back 100% of the equipment's cost against taxable profits of the year of purchase.**

Infection control in practice –

Thurso vet turns to Miele to bring best practice laundry in-house

There's one thing that all rural vets are familiar with, and that's getting covered head to toe in mud - and often much worse! For Donald S McGregor & Partners veterinary practice based in Thurso, the most northerly town in mainland Scotland, muck and mud come with the territory when out visiting local farming or equine customers.

As a busy practice also caring for small animals, washing soon mounts up, with dirty uniforms, soiled bedding and towels among the items that need to be laundered regularly. The practice used an external laundry firm to handle its washing, however, increasingly dirty linen was piling up waiting for the laundry service provider's next pick up. It became clear that a faster turn-around on laundry was required.

The practice began to consider bringing its laundry in-house and Thurso Vets decided to consult with the Thain Group, the largest commercial laundry equipment provider in Scotland, to see if taking care of their own laundry needs would be economically viable.

The practice was also keen that its new equipment should be robust enough to handle large loads, could eradicate the spread of infection on contaminated linen, and also speed up the laundry process.

“Having done our sums and weighed up the pros and cons of continuing to outsource our laundry or bring it in-house, the choice was obvious.”


Guy Gordon, veterinary surgeon and a director at the Thurso-based practice

Thain recommended a commercial washing machine and tumble dryer from Miele. Factoring in the cost of the machine and a dryer, ongoing servicing, and the electrical and plumbing work that needed to happen to install the machines, the practice costed out the in-house laundry facility over five years. It soon became clear that bringing laundry in-house would be a far more cost-effective proposition.

Designed specifically for organisations in the care sector who regularly handle contaminated items, Miele commercial washing machines feature a special disinfection programme which washes to high temperatures to ensure any traces of infection are killed in the washing process.

The machine's ability to wash to such high temperatures and contribute to its infection control policies is important as it can now follow recommended guidelines around laundry processes for infection control. The practice now has the assurance that any bacteria, potential harmful organisms and flea eggs are all killed during the washing cycle.

The Miele washing machine is also Category 5 compliant with the Water Regulations Advisory Scheme (WRAS), providing water backflow protection.



*“We now have a far more **cost-effective and efficient way of keeping on top of all of our washing** and the assurance that we're complying with best practice when it comes to infection control with our laundry processes.”*

The Miele logo is displayed in white, bold, sans-serif font on a red rectangular background.

About the Professional division of Miele

We have been manufacturing commercial laundry machines for over 50 years and are proud to work with veterinary practices to guide them on their laundry requirements.

Our commercial washing machines are WRAS compliant and have a reputation for quality, reliability and longevity.

We hope you found this guide useful. If you would like advice about your current laundry processes, visit

www.miele.co.uk/pro/vets

**Or contact us on 0333 230 1851
or by email at professional.info@miele.co.uk**

Miele
Fairacres
Marcham Road
Abingdon
OX14 1TW