



ASSOSISTEMA

**QUALITY AND HYGIENIC SAFETY
OF THE TEXTILES USED
IN HEALTHCARE AND HOSPITALITY**

UNI EN 14065 and RABC ASSOSISTEMA Guidelines

Textiles treated in a laundry - Biocontamination control system

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ASSOSISTEMA CONFINDUSTRIA
Viale Pasteur, 8 00144 Rome, Italy
Phone no. +39.06.5903430
e-mail assosistema@assosistema.it



**QUALITY AND HYGIENIC SAFETY OF THE
TEXTILES USED IN HEALTHCARE AND HOSPITALITY**

Position Paper

**UNI EN 14065 Certification and Assosistema RABC Guidelines for
"Textiles treated in a laundry - Biocontamination control system"**

Assosistema Confindustria is an association representing companies that provide rental, sanitisation and sterilisation of textile and healthcare devices used in hotels, restaurants, hospitals, nursing homes, private clinics, as well as companies that manufacture, distribute and maintain personal and collective protection equipment.

The annual turnover of this industry amounts to approximately 1.3 billion Euro; it includes 1000 companies whose staff amounts to approximately 30,000 workers, including seasonal workers.

This document is intended as a useful tool, at this special time, for all the institutions, for companies and for individual citizens who can obtain information on what is going on around them and affects them closely, in areas such as health, tourism, food&beverage.

The industry of sanitisation of textiles delivers, among other services, the **rental, sanitization and logistics for textile accessories** (bed linen, towels, tablecloths, etc.), related and crucial to the business of healthcare, accommodation facilities and restaurants all over the country.

This is made possible by highly specialized businesses that voluntarily **certified for microbiological control of treated textiles - the UNI EN 14065 Standard as per Assosistema Guidelines** - which is a fundamental prerequisite to provide private and public healthcare and hospitality facilities with linen that is **qualitatively and hygienically safe as refers to biocontamination control**.

In other words, in order to prevent the spread of diseases transmissible by pathogens, the industrial process of textile sanitization - in addition to comfort and sensory cleaning - must ensure **quality and hygienic safety**, through the **technical standard UNI EN 14065:2016**, based on a **RABC (Risk Analysis Biocontamination Control) control system**, according to Assosistema Guidelines.

Bearing this in mind, UNI EN 14065 ensures the implementation of a business management system that provides the appropriate microbiological quality to treated textiles according to their specific use (healthcare, food&beverage, tourism, manufacturing).

Microbiological analysis covers all the stages in the process that treated textiles undergo in a laundry plant, since reception of the dirty laundry until delivery to the customer, by sorting, selecting, classifying, washing, hydro extraction, wringing, drying, finishing, folding and packaging.

Please note that the UNI EN 14065 standard focuses not just on the importance of sanitising and decontaminating the textile items, but also on the need to protect them from potential recontamination, through risk analysis and prevention on the whole production cycle, until the products are returned for further use.

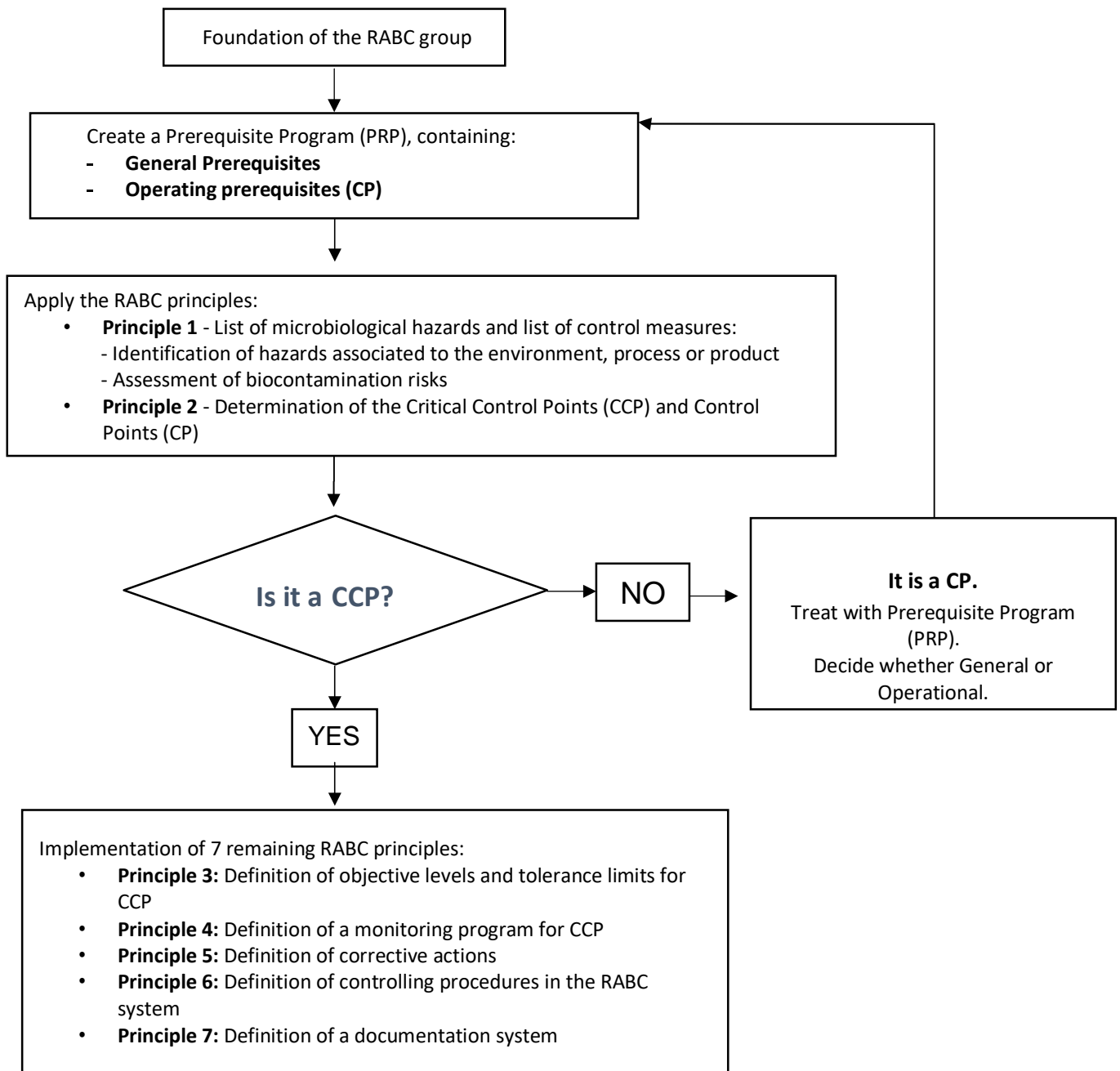
The industrial process includes a thermal component: not only is the washing carried out at high temperature, but the next drying/ironing steps reach even higher temperatures.

Then there is the chemical treatment step, by use of detergents and disinfectants with bactericidal, virucidal and fungicidal capacity, that ensure perfect sanitisation and safety of use.

The RABC system also includes monitoring and sanitation of surfaces, machinery, means of transport and operators. Nothing is left to chance...

14065 standard ensures a true analysis of the biocontamination risk, assessing the potential microbiological risk at each step of the textile treatment process, its potential cause, the control method implemented and identifies the measures taken to restore compliance in case of detection of any deviations and faults.

The process described by the standard can be schematically represented by this diagram.



As a result of the foundation of the RABC multidisciplinary group, whose task is to implement the control system, a prerequisites program is prepared, containing general prerequisites, best practice to be adopted inside the facility, and operational prerequisites through which measurement criteria, thresholds and corrective actions are defined. Then, through a risk analysis, Control Points (CP), treated by means of the previously established Operating Prerequisites, and Critical Control Points (CCP) are identified. The latter correspond to the process steps in which a deviation implies that the company is not able to guarantee sanitised products. For these, closer observation and timely corrective actions might be necessary, which is ensured by the implementation of the remaining RABC principles.

Since its first version in 2004, **UNI EN 14065** has been accompanied by the **Guidelines of Assosistema Confindustria**, that developed microbiological quality levels and operational instructions on the procedures, which is necessary to obtain RABC certificate, thus tightening the standard limits even further, to ensure the supply of sanitized textiles with highly controlled microbiological contamination.

The Guidelines were revised twice and their content was improved; the second review was also aimed at transposing changes introduced by the current version of the Standard (2016).

To enhance and guarantee this process, Assosistema also signed a **Memorandum of Understanding with the main Certification Bodies**, to confirm their commitment to follow the Guidelines in the RABC certification process with associated and non-associated companies that request it.

Under the Memorandum, certification bodies shall affix the stamp "Certification Body that signed the Assosistema Memorandum of Understanding" on the certificates; this is issued by the Association as a tool to inform customers and end users of the positive outcome of the certification process according to the Assosistema Guidelines.

Nowadays, a UNI EN 14065 certification as provided for by the Assosistema Guidelines (in compliance with the microbiological quality thresholds established by the Guidelines themselves) guarantees that the company reached and maintains an optimum level of hygienic safety of the textiles treated in industrial laundries.

UNI EN 14065 and Covid-19

Unlike the bacterial load, the viral load in the environment cannot increase if hosts are not available for its replication. It seems that the washing process set up and validated with a microbial reduction on linen in mind, and certified as per "UNI EN 14065:2016 standard and Assosistema Guidelines", is effective in eliminating possible viral loads, too.

In conclusion, this certified and controlled system allows the maximum decontamination and minimal recontamination of textiles washed and rented to healthcare and accommodation facilities. The hygienic quality of textiles used in hotels and restaurants, ensured by EN 14065 standard, must surely be an additional safety element for the healthcare facilities and for the qualification of the Italian hospitality offer from a hygienic point of view.