STERILIZATION GLOSSARY

AAMI	Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation.
Aerate	To expose EO sterilized items to warm, circulating air.
Aerator	A machine designed to speed up the removal of EO residuals from sterilized items by subjecting them to warm, circulating air.
AORN	Association of periOperative Registered Nurses.
Bioburden	The amount of microbial contamination; associated with specific items prior to sterilization.
Chamber	The enclosed interior space of a sterilizer, which houses and holds medical devices during the sterilization cycle.
Conditioning	The beginning phase of the sterilization cycle where the inner chamber and the products to be sterilized are allow to attain the required temperature and relative humidity prior to the admission of and exposure to the sterilant for a specific time.
Cycle Time	The total time of all phases of the sterilization cycle from the time the sterilizer door is closed, all stages are completed and the door is opened.
Endospore	A small spore formed within the vegetative cells of some bacteria. and or the inner layer of the wall of a spore.
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency.

Exposure Time	A validated time for which a sterilizer chamber is held and maintained at specific condition, temperature, sterilant concentration, humidity, and pressure to achieve sterilization of all contents.
Lumen	The interior path, channel or hole, which runs through, a hollow structured, tube, medical device, needle or instrument.
Microorganism	Forms of life, which are too small to see with the naked eye; bacteria, viruses, fungi.
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration; a Federal agency which provides regulations and standard working conditions for all employees. Concerned with a safe work environment and employee safety.
PPE	Personal protective equipment; specialized clothing or equipment worn by an employee for protection against work place hazards.
Residual	Pertaining to what is left over or remaining
SAL	Sterility assurance level; probability of a viable microorganism being present on a product after being sterilized.
Saturated Steam	Steam that exerts the maximum pressure for water vapor at a defined temperature and pressure containing no more than 3% entrained water droplets.
Spore	Organisms, which are capable of forming a thick protective wall around themselves enabling them to survive in adverse conditions.
Sterile	Completely devoid of all living microorganisms.

Sterilization	A process designed to remove or destroy all viable forms of microbial life, including bacterial spores, to achieve an acceptable sterility assurance level.
Sterilization Cycle	A well defined and timed specific sequence of operational steps and events to attain sterilization in a sealed sterilizer chamber e.g. condition, sterilize, exhaust, dry and cool.
Sterilizer	A type of apparatus or equipment used to sterilize medical devices by exposing them to a sterilant.
Sterilant	Physical or chemical entity or combination of entities, that has the microbicidal activity to achieve sterility under specific and validated conditions.
Toxic	Poisonous.
Validation	Documented procedure for obtaining, recording, and interpreting the results required to establish that a process will consistently yield product results with predetermined specifications.