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Extract from Evans Medical Operating Instructions for Autoclaves

Pertaining to the blog series on the Devonport Incident.

1. Load the autoclave,
2. Close the door and tighten the handles firmly,
3. Close the condensate drain valve,
4. Check that all other valves are closed,
5. Open the vacuum valve,
6. When the vacuum, as recorded by the combined Vac./pressure gauge reaches 15" Hg. close the vacuum valve,
7. Open the main steam valve,
8. When the pressure in the autoclave just begins to rise above atmospheric pressure, crack open the condensate drain valve,
9. When the condensate drain temperature reaches 240° F. (115° C. approximately) as recorded by the temperature chart, close the condensate drain valve and mark the chart at the point where the temperature reached 240° F. (start of cycle). The pressure gauge should now be reading 10 p.s.i.
10. After the appropriate sterilizing time check that the temperature has not dropped on the chart during the cycle. (If it has dropped report this to the Department Manager for action.),
11. Crack the condensate drain valve slightly. Reduce the pressure gradually over 5 minutes,
12. When the pressure is down open the line vent valve,
13. After ensuring that the autoclave is no longer under pressure, slacken off the handles to slightly crack the door open,
14. Open the door gradually by further loosening the handles, over a period of 20 minutes,
15. Open the door fully,
16. After 10 minutes unload the cages, using a face shield, rubber apron and protective gloves.

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