Linen Management

Linen Loss
The national industry standard for complete linen replacement cost is 10-14 cent per pound of soiled linen processed for a year. Higher when you throw in OR and other special linens. Of this figure, probably 50-60% will be loss while the rest is normal fair/wear/tear. At a teaching Medical Hospital stats are slightly higher than a community based type. Linen replacement for a 500 bed general hospital should be between $200-250,000.

Red Bagging of Soiled Laundry/Linen
Soiled laundry/linen generated by healthcare facilities is considered to be contaminated and not regulated (red bag) medical waste. The linen should be handled as potentially infectious thus the need to comply with universal/standard precautions as outlined in OSHA 29CFR 1910.1030 and CDC 1996. A standard reusable linen bag is all that is necessary to contain the soiled laundry/linen. If leak-through is noticed, double bagging is sufficient. Reusable linen bags today are of material and thread count (200-400 denier) to prevent soak-through with normal handling or being transported in chutes. Cloth (reusable) bags are far less expensive than single-use plastic bags and also reduce disposable waste.

Dispensing Linen & Scrubs
An "Auto-Valet," or a linen/scrubs “vending machine,” can help you keep better control of your inventory. There are several systems on the market today. "Scrub Management" "Scrub Avail" "Scrub Exchange" to name a few. All systems require access codes by user and they must put one in to get one out. A facility will have to weigh the cost of the system, (ROI payback) against the cost of lost scrubs. These systems, based on quantity requirements can run well over $100,000.00. Space is another consideration, most dressing rooms in an OR suite may not have the room for installation.

Some good references are:

American National Standard Institute/Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation publication ST65-2000 "Processing of reusable Surgical textiles for use in healthcare facilities"