

## **BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS**

Bloodborne pathogens are pathogenic microorganisms that are present in human blood and can cause disease in humans. These pathogens include, but are not limited to, hepatitis B (HBV), hepatitis C (HCV), and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). The primary objective is to significantly reduce and/or eliminate infection as a result of occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens.

### **UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS**

The approach to infection control is that all human blood and certain human body fluids are treated as if known to be infectious for HIV, HBV, HCV, and other bloodborne pathogens:

- ❖ Any accident/incident involving transfer of blood or bodily fluid should be reported to the supervisor.
- ❖ Latex gloves are to be located in all first aid kits and should be worn for touching blood and bodily fluids. This would include handling items or surfaces soiled with blood or bodily fluids and rendering assistance to injured persons. Always wash hands and arms after helping a victim.
- ❖ Employees trained to perform CPR, separate yourself from direct contact with the victim by using a face shield or mask.
- ❖ All equipment and working surfaces contaminated with blood and bodily fluids shall be decontaminated with appropriate disinfectant to eliminate the potential for infection. If no disinfectant is available, it can be substituted with a solution of ¼ cup of bleach per gallon of water.

### **SIGNIFICANT EXPOSURE**

A significant bloodborne exposure is an occupational risk exposure to blood or potential infectious body fluid by:

- ❖ Needle stick, punctures, or cut by an object through the skin.
- ❖ Direct contact of mucous membrane (eyes, mouth, nose, etc.)
- ❖ Exposure of broken skin to blood or potential infectious body fluids.
- ❖ If a significant exposure occurs:
  - **Immediately do the following:**

- ✓ Needle-sticks, cuts, and skin exposures should be washed with soap and water.
- ✓ Splashes to the nose, mouth, or skin should be flushed with water.
- ✓ Splashes to the eyes should be flushed with clean water or saline.
- **After** the above steps are completed:
  - ✓ Report the exposure to your immediate supervisor. If a significant bloodborne exposure has occurred, get the exposed individual to the nearest emergency room for evaluation.
  - ✓ Testing the employee and the source is strongly recommended when a high-risk exposure has occurred. The employee has the right to request or decline testing. The source fluid/object should be collected (if possible) for testing. If the source is a person, the person cannot be tested without consent. The health care provider will document the exposure, do any testing, and hold all **test results in confidence**.
  - ✓ Follow your agency process for completing any necessary forms. If medical attention is obtained from a health care provider, a Workforce Safety and Insurance claim form should be completed.

Contents Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (Users of Safety Talk are advised to determine the suitability of the information as it applies to local situations and work practices and its conformance with applicable laws and regulations).

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