

Safety Talk

Bloodborne pathogens

Before you begin

Survey your facility to identify work activities that could expose employees to blood or body fluids. These activities may include medical treatment, first aid, housekeeping, and restroom-facility maintenance. To determine if your company has a bloodborne pathogen policy and training program, review your safety procedures.

Exposure to bloodborne pathogens is regulated by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) Bloodborne Pathogens Standard 29 CFR 1910.1030.



Introduction

Bloodborne pathogens are disease-causing microorganisms found in the blood and/or body fluids of infected people. If healthy people have contact with these pathogens, they may also become infected. However, the spread of diseases caused by these pathogens can easily be prevented. This safety talk will describe the methods used to prevent spreading disease caused by bloodborne pathogens.

Definitions

Bloodborne Pathogens means pathogenic microorganisms that are present in human blood and can cause disease in humans. These pathogens include, but are not limited to, Hepatitis B virus (HBV) and Human Immunodeficiency virus (HIV)

Universal Precautions is an approach to infection control which assumes all human blood and certain human body fluids are treated as if known to be infectious for HIV, HBV, and other bloodborne pathogens.

Other potentially infectious material includes:

- Human body fluids such as:
 - o semen.
 - o vaginal secretions.
 - o cerebrospinal fluid.
 - o synovial fluid.
 - o pleural fluid.
 - o pericardial fluid.
 - o peritoneal fluid.
 - o amniotic fluid.
 - o saliva in dental procedures.
 - o body fluid that is visibly contaminated with blood.
 - o all body fluids in situations where it is difficult or impossible to differentiate between body fluids.
- Any unfixed tissue or organ, other than intact skin, from a human, living or dead.
- HIV-containing cell or tissue cultures, organ cultures.
- HIV- or HBV-containing culture medium or other solutions.
- Blood, organs, or other tissues from experimental animals infected with HIV or HBV.

Discussion

Contaminated blood or other body fluids may transmit serious diseases like Hepatitis B and C, as well as the Human Immunodeficiency virus. Contaminated blood or other body fluids must find a direct route into the body to cause infection. Casual contact, such as coughing or sneezing, typically do not transmit these microorganisms. Common ways bloodborne pathogens can enter the body are:

- Contact through a wound or other skin opening.
- Sprayed or splashed into your eyes or mouth.
- During cardiopulmonary resuscitation, rescue breathing without a barrier device.
- Direct injection by a contaminated needle.
- Touching contaminated hands to the eyes or mouth.
- Having unprotected sex with an infected person.

Take precautions

Talk to employees about which precautions may be best for your facility. Universal precautions are safe practices you should follow any time there is risk of contact with another person's blood or body fluids. These safe practices include the use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

- Wear disposable gloves when there is risk of exposure to people or materials that may be contaminated with blood or body fluids.
- To prevent transferring the contamination to your hands, use care removing contaminated gloves. Thoroughly wash your hands after removing your gloves.
- If there is a possibility for a spray or splash of blood or body fluids to your face and eyes, wear goggles or a face shield. Cover any other exposed areas of your body where you may have cuts or breaks in the skin.
- Wear a rubber or vinyl apron to keep blood and body fluids off your clothing.
- Do not pick up needles or broken glass with your bare hands. Wear gloves and use a scoop or dustpan. Deposit the objects into a puncture-resistant, leak-proof container.
- Wash your hands or use waterless sanitizer after touching anything that another person's blood or body fluids may have contaminated.

Responding to injuries

Use universal precautions when attending to any bleeding wound on another person. Assume that bloodborne pathogens could be present.

- Have the worker apply bandages to control bleeding for minor injuries. If needed, provide assistance.
- Wear disposable gloves and try to avoid contact with any blood or body fluids on the person or their clothing.
- If disposable gloves are not readily available in an emergency, use your work gloves, a clean towel, or newspaper to prevent contact with blood or body fluids.
- When finished with treatment and clean up, carefully remove your gloves to avoid touching the glove's contaminated exterior.
- Thoroughly wash your hands immediately after removing your gloves.
- If you do get blood or body fluids on your skin, immediately wash the contaminated areas with soap and water. Use an emergency eyewash to thoroughly flush any contamination from your eyes or mouth. Report any exposure incidents to your supervisor or medical department.

Cleaning up contaminated areas and materials

Review the safety precautions listed below about safe clean up and disposal of contaminated materials.

- Clean up and disinfect blood and body fluids as soon as possible. If needed, barricade the contaminated area to keep others from inadvertently touching or walking through it.
- HIV virus dies within hours of exposure to air, but the hepatitis B virus can survive on exposed surfaces in a dried state for at least seven days.
- Wear disposable gloves to clean up contaminated surfaces, tools, equipment, etc.
- Use a special germicidal cleaning product or a solution of one-quarter cup bleach in one gallon of water.

- Be careful not to splash or sling contamination during wiping/cleaning. If necessary, wear safety glasses, goggles, or a face shield.

Dispose of cleaning wipes, gloves, and other disposable items as contaminated waste.

- Place contaminated wastes into approved biohazard bags (red with the biohazard label) and follow the proper disposal procedures. Do not throw contaminated wastes into the regular trash.
- Thoroughly wash your hands after removing your gloves.

Group activity

Ask attendees to identify jobs and locations in the facility where they might be at risk of exposure to infected blood or other body fluids

Ask employees where they can find the appropriate PPE, cleaning solution, and equipment.

Have participants list ways in which someone who responds to first aid situation may be exposed to bloodborne pathogens. A few examples are listed:

- Attempting to control bleeding
- Administering CPR without CPR mask
- Unable to don PPE before offering first aid
- PPE tears or rips

Resources

[OSHA: Bloodborne Pathogens Standard 29 CFR 1910.1030](#)

[OSHA: Safety and Health Topics – Bloodborne Pathogens and Needlestick Prevention](#)

[NIOSH: Bloodborne Infectious Diseases – HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C](#)

[The American National Red Cross: Preventing the Spread of Bloodborne Pathogens Fact Sheet](#)