

BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS

INTRODUCTION:

The better you understand the risks involved in exposure to bloodborne pathogens, the easier it is to take measures to protect yourself and your co-workers.

AIDS:

AIDS is a disease caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus – or HIV.

- AIDS is a disease transmitted by blood.
- HIV attacks a person's immune system and causes it to break down.
- Due to recent treatments, the number of HIV-infected people who develop AIDS and experience serious illness or death, is decreasing.
- There is not vaccine to prevent HIV infection.

HEPATITIS B – HBV:

Hepatitis B is a viral infection that affects the liver.

- Most people infected with hepatitis B – HBV – recover, but ten percent develop chronic infections.
- A vaccine is available to prevent hepatitis B.
- If infected with HBV, you may have no symptoms or you may feel like you have the flu.
- You may also be so sick that you have to be hospitalized.

HEPATITIS C – HCV:

Hepatitis C is also a viral infection that affects the liver. Since hepatitis B and C have similar symptoms, a blood test is required to tell the difference.

- Most infected with hepatitis C show no symptoms.
- 85% develop chronic infections.
- Up to 10,000 people die from chronic liver disease caused by hepatitis C every year.
- No vaccine is available for HCV.

TRANSMISSION OF BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS:

HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C virus are spread by many types of body fluids such as:

- Blood
- Vaginal secretions
- Semen

To get these infections, infected blood or body fluids must enter the body through a break in the skin or mucous membranes:

- During sexual relations with an infected person
- When sharing needles, if the skin is punctured by a contaminated needle.

TRANSMISSION IN THE WORKPLACE:

Are you at risk for getting one of these viruses on the job? To transmit HIV, HBV or HCV in the workplace, there must be contact between broken skin or mucous membranes and infected blood.

- HIV and hepatitis B or C are not spread through the air like cold and flu germs.
- You won't get infected from working alongside an infected person or from a kiss on the cheek, coughing or sneezing.
- You won't get infected from telephones or bathrooms.
- You won't get infected from eating utensils, water fountains, gym equipment or swimming pools.
- You won't get infected from donating blood.

MINIMIZING YOUR EXPOSURE RISK:

You can minimize your risk if you know how to protect yourself from potential exposure. HIV, HBV and HCV can enter your body:

- Through eyes, nose or mouth
- Through broken skin such as cuts and sores

PRECAUTIONS YOU CAN TAKE:

- Hands and other body parts should be washed immediately after contact with blood or any other OPIM.
- Surfaces soiled with blood and body fluids should be disinfected.

PREVENTIVE HOUSEKEEPING:

- Always wear gloves and a protective smock/apron when cleaning or maintaining areas contaminated with blood or body fluids.
- Be alert for sharp objects when emptying trash containers.
- Use a brush and dust pan, tongs or forceps to pick up broken glassware.

DO NOT USE YOUR HANDS:

- Place contaminated waste or cleaning materials in a sturdy, leak-proof container and dispose according to policy.
- Don't clean blood or body fluid spills or fluids contaminated with blood unless trained or authorized.
- Block off area until authorized cleaning personnel arrive.
- Disposable, single-use gloves should be discarded after use and replaced if damaged.
- Heavy utility gloves can be reused after cleaning, but must be discarded if ripped or damaged.
- When removing gloves, don't touch the exterior surfaces.
- Wash hands after contact with blood or body fluids.

PREVENTION THROUGH PROTECTIVE BARRIERS:

When an accident happens on the job:

- For a minor injury, the person should try to stop the bleeding without help.
- If assistance is needed, use a barrier to avoid direct contact.
- Use disposable gloves as a barrier.
- In a machine-related emergency, turn off machinery that has trapped or injured the victim, then call for help.
- Have a co-worker notify company first responders.
- If blood or body fluids get on skin, wash it off as soon as possible with non-abrasive soap and water.
- Flush exposed eyes, nose or mouth immediately.
- If CPR is needed, avoid unprotected mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.
- Keep a pocket mask on hand for protection from a victim's body fluids.
- After the incident, the area is hazardous until cleaned.

BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS

I have read and understand this Bloodborne Pathogens handout.

Printed Name: _____ W#: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

If you have any questions, please feel free to call the Safety Office (985) 549-2157.

Mail completed and signed form to: Safety Office
SLU 10452