



Bloodborne Pathogens and Safe Response

Overview

If you are a health professional, a designated first responder, or first aid provider in your company, or if you are involved in maintenance or housekeeping work that could potentially expose you to bloodborne pathogens, you need to know how to protect yourself from potentially infectious material.

What are Bloodborne Pathogens?

Bloodborne pathogens are microorganisms in human blood that can cause disease in humans. Examples are hepatitis B virus (HBV), human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), malaria, syphilis, and brucellosis.

Engineering and Work Practice Controls

Your company strives to reduce the risk of infection to employees who, in order to perform their jobs, may be reasonably anticipated to come into contact with blood and other potentially infectious materials. The risks can be reduced by following good work practices. Universal Precautions is an approach to infection control where all human blood and certain human body fluids are treated as if they were known to be infectious for bloodborne pathogens.

Follow these precautions when working with human blood and other potentially infectious materials (OPIMs):

- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Dispose of sharps properly.
- Properly label and enclose any material contaminated with blood or OPIMs in leakproof red bags or containers.
- Wash your hands after handling contaminated material (even though you were wearing PPE). Report any exposure incident to your employer. An exposure incident is any specific eye, mouth, other mucous membrane, non-intact skin, or parenteral contact with blood or OPIM resulting from the performance of an employee's duties.

Hepatitis B Vaccination

Hepatitis B is the greatest bloodborne pathogen risk. Your employer offers you the hepatitis B vaccination series when your job duties could expose you to blood or certain body fluids. If you initially refuse the vaccination, you must sign a declination form, but you can request to be vaccinated later.

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