



SAFETY UNLIMITED, INC.

Weekly Safety Meeting

Bloodborne Pathogens and Helping the Injured

Bloodborne pathogens are microorganisms, normally carried in infected blood and bodily fluids, that can cause diseases, some fatal, such as Hepatitis B and C, as well as HIV.

Bloodborne pathogens must find a direct route of entry into the body for infection to be possible, but bodily fluids can also splash into the eyes and cause infection.

Exchange of these body fluids must be direct. Thus, you cannot contract a bloodborne pathogen disease when an infected person touches you or sneezes/coughs on you.

Bloodborne pathogens are a huge concern for workers in certain industries, but they should also be a concern to everyone. While not everyone has the risk to be exposed to bloodborne pathogens on a daily basis at their job, there is always a chance that you could come into contact with potentially infectious materials.

Examples of scenarios include providing first aid after an accident or medical event or cleaning up potentially infectious materials.

Universal Precautions:

Universal precautions are a method of infection control in which all blood and certain human bodily fluids are treated as if known to be infectious for HIV, HBV, and other bloodborne pathogens.

Universal precautions are to be observed in all situations where there is a potential for contact with blood or other potentially infectious material.

Personal protective equipment should be used in conjunction with universal precautions when dealing with all body fluids.

Qualified, trained first aiders should be equipped to safeguard against this exposure. You should be aware that there is a good possibility that you may have small nicks or cuts on you from daily work activities and jobs tasks.

These nicks and cuts, in addition to your mouth, nose and eyes are examples of possible entryways for blood borne pathogens present in the injured person to enter your circulatory system.

Personal Protective Equipment:

Personal protective equipment, which includes latex or vinyl gloves, gowns, mouthpieces, resuscitation bags, and face masks can significantly reduce the health risks for workers exposed to blood and other potentially infectious materials.

The PPE must be suitable for the level of expected exposure and should be readily accessible to employees and available in appropriate sizes.

Employees should be trained on the proper use of PPE and how to respond effectively and safely to an injury.

Responding to Injuries:

Before providing first aid or assisting someone who is injured, ensure your own safety by following these universal precautions to protect yourself from bloodborne pathogens:

- Check the area for hazards before responding;
- Treat all bodily fluids as if they are infectious;
- Wear disposable gloves, face shields, masks, aprons, and other barrier devices to prevent contact;
- Have the victim bandage his or her own wounds, if able;
- Don't pick up sharp objects with your hands as they could puncture your gloves and skin;
- Clean and disinfect the affected area with a solution of 10 parts water to one-part bleach, or another appropriate disinfecting solution;
- Remove gloves and other protective equipment in a manner that prevents exposure;
- Place all contaminated items in appropriately marked bags or containers;
- Thoroughly wash any part of your body that may have been exposed to a bodily fluid with soap and water;
- Report any exposure or unprotected contact with potentially infectious bodily fluids to your employer so that medical follow-up can be made; and
- Disinfect cleaning equipment to prevent spreading viruses to other areas of the facility.

Remember:

While you may not work in an industry such as healthcare where exposure to bloodborne pathogens is a major concern, you should still be aware of how to prevent exposure.

Whether at home or at work, the potential to have to provide first aid or clean up potentially infectious materials in your lifetime is high. Protecting yourself from exposure to bloodborne pathogens needs to be your first concern when dealing with potentially infectious materials.

THINK SHARP...NEVER HANDLE BROKEN GLASS WITH BARE HANDS!!

