



Bloodborne Pathogens

What are bloodborne pathogens? Bloodborne pathogens are infectious microorganisms in human blood that can cause disease in humans. These pathogens include, but are not limited to, hepatitis B (HBV), hepatitis C (HCV) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Needlesticks and other sharps-related injuries may expose workers to bloodborne pathogens. Workers in many occupations, including first responders, housekeeping personnel in some industries, nurses and other healthcare personnel, all may be at risk for exposure to bloodborne pathogens.

“OSHA does not generally consider all maintenance personnel and janitorial staff employed in non-healthcare facilities to have occupational exposure, but it is the employer's responsibility to determine which job classifications or specific tasks and procedures involve occupational exposure.” (OSHA, 1993.)

How do you become infected? Bloodborne pathogens may be passed on when the microorganisms enter the body through mucus membranes, through breaks in the skin or through needle sticks. In non-medical occupations, exposure is most common when an injured worker's blood contacts a co-worker rendering first aid. Practicing universal precautions and wearing the proper personal protective equipment will prevent exposure.

What is the Bloodborne Pathogen Standard? A standard of regulations enacted by OSHA in 1991 for safety in medical and other facilities that have occupational exposure to blood and other bodily fluids. A copy of the Standard or law must be ACCESSIBLE to all employees if it applies to you and your workplace. The standard protects workers who can reasonably be anticipated to come into contact with blood or OPIM as a result of doing their job duties.

What are OPIM? Other Potentially Infectious Materials are blood products (such as plasma or serum), semen, vaginal secretions, cerebrospinal fluid, pleural fluid (or lung fluid), synovial fluid (or fluid from your joints), amniotic fluid (or uterine fluid), peritoneal fluid (or fluid that fills your body cavity), saliva in dental settings, any bodily fluid that is visibly contaminated with blood, any bodily fluid that you can't tell what it is.

What is required under the Bloodborne Pathogen Standard?

1. Written exposure control plan and update the plan annually: The written plan should list all tasks and procedures in which exposure may occur and must list job classifications in which exposures may/will occur.
2. Use Universal Precautions: Universal precautions are methods of preventing infection by treating all human body fluids as if they were contaminated and using proper personal protective equipment whenever you are required to come into contact with these fluids.
3. Identify and implement use of Engineering Controls and Work Practice Controls: Tools and facilities provided by employer that eliminate or minimize the exposure and include readily accessible hand washing facilities, contaminated sharps management, keeping food and drink out of the work area, procedures involving blood handling, transport of specimens, and contaminated equipment,
4. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Shall be used where exposure remains after institution of engineering and work practice controls. Employer shall provide appropriate PPE at no cost to

- employee. PPE may include: gloves, gowns, laboratory coats, face shields or masks, eye protection, mouthpieces, resuscitation bags, pocket masks, or other ventilation devices.
5. Hepatitis B Vaccine must be made available to all workers with occupational exposure within 10 days of job assignment and after training has taken place.
 6. Make post-exposure prophylaxis evaluation and follow-up available to any occupationally exposed worker who has an exposure incident.
 7. Signs and Labels: Warning labels need to be affixed to containers of regulated waste, refrigerators and freezers containing blood or other potentially infectious material; and other containers used to store, transport, or ship blood or other potentially infectious materials.
 8. Training: Employers must provide training and information to workers upon initial assignment and annually thereafter. Training must include information on bloodborne pathogens and diseases, methods used to control occupational exposure, hepatitis B vaccine, and medical evaluation, and post-exposure follow-up procedures,
 9. Recordkeeping: Medical Records shall be maintained for duration of employment plus 30 years. Training Records shall be maintained for 3 years from the date of training. A Sharps Injury Log must list for each incident the type and brand of device involved, department/work area, and how the incident happened.

Sources:

Occupational Health and Safety Administration. (1993, February 1). Most Frequently Asked Questions Concerning the bloodborne pathogens Standard. Retrieved April 11, 2016, from https://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=INTERPRETATIONS&p_id=21010

Occupational Health and Safety Administration. (2011, January). OSHA Fact Sheet "OSHA's Bloodborne Pathogens Standard". Retrieved April 11, 2016, from https://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_BloodborneFacts/bbfact01.pdf

Oklahoma State University. (2012, November). EHS Safety Training: Bloodborne Pathogens. Retrieved April 11, 2016, from <https://ehs.okstate.edu/modules/bbp/signs.htm>