

# **2 - Bloodborne Pathogens: Safety Training**

EH&S – MGA

**Goals: This safety session should teach you:**

- A. That human blood and other body fluids can pose serious health risks.
- B. That you can protect yourself by following simple precautions.

**OSHA Regulation: 29 CFR 1910.1030**

**1. Bloodborne pathogens are microorganisms found in blood or other body fluids that can cause disease in people.**

- A. One type is the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), the virus that causes AIDS.
  - 1. Some people can have HIV for years without symptoms.
  - 2. If it does become AIDS, however, it is a very serious, often fatal, illness, even with the new medicines that have been developed.
- B. Other pathogens are the hepatitis B (HBV) and hepatitis C (HCV) viruses.
  - 1. These viruses affect the liver and greatly increase the risk of a person developing other potentially fatal liver diseases, such as cirrhosis and cancer.

**2. Fortunately, these pathogens exist only in blood and body fluids, and the illnesses are not transmitted by casual contact like:**

- A. Using public facilities or objects that infected people have touched or used.
- B. Being in the same room with or touching an infected person.
- C. Being coughed or sneezed on by an infected person.

**3. The most common means of transmitting these illnesses are:**

- A. Sexual contact
- B. Sharing drug needles
- C. Being stuck with a needle or other sharp instrument that is already infected
- D. Direct contact with infected body fluids and broken skin

**4. Exposure to human blood occurs most commonly in healthcare facilities— although other people may have occupational exposure also.**

- A. Housekeepers or maintenance personnel may be exposed during normal cleanup operations or after a first-aid emergency or similar accident.
- B. Law enforcement and correction officers may have to deal with violent situations where blood is present.
- C. Morticians and funeral home workers may have exposure.
- D. Laundry workers may have to deal with bloody linens or clothing.
- E. Workers may be exposed if they are members of a first-aid team.
- F. Athletic participants may be exposed to blood due to injury to a teammate or other participant in the athletic game or practice.

**5. Workers who may be exposed to blood or other body fluids follow what are known as “universal precautions.”**

- A. This means treating all blood and body fluids as if they are infected.
- B. It means wearing gloves or other personal protective equipment (PPE) if they could be exposed to blood or body fluids.
- C. To get proper protection from PPE:
  - 1. It should be inspected before every use.
  - 2. It should be removed carefully to avoid accidental contact with blood.
  - 3. It should be disposed of in special containers.
- D. It’s important for workers to wash hands thoroughly after removing PPE—it is a very simple step to take for added protection.
- E. If soap and water is not available, they should use antiseptic hand cleaners as soon as possible after contact with potentially infectious materials.

**6. Workers using needles, knives, or other “sharps” that could puncture the skin need to take extra precautions.**

- A. Dispose of sharps immediately after use in properly marked containers.
- B. Use the safest instruments possible and never recap needles.
- C. Use extra caution when transferring blood or other body fluids from a syringe to a specimen container.
- D. Never reach a hand into a sharps container.
- E. Never clean up broken glass or other sharp material by hand; use tongs or a brush and pan.

**7. Take commonsense precautions where blood might be present.**

- A. No eating, drinking, or smoking.
- B. Don’t keep food or drinks where blood or other potentially infectious materials are present.
- C. Don’t apply makeup or lip balm, or insert contact lenses.
- D. Make sure any broken skin areas or abrasions are covered.
- E. Never suction any potentially infected fluid by mouth.

**Summation:**

Whether or not you are likely to have occupational exposure to blood, everyone should know the basics about the hazards of bloodborne pathogens. Since they present the possibility of such serious illnesses as HIV infection or hepatitis B or hepatitis C viruses, anyone exposed to blood or other body fluids should protect himself or herself from direct contact.