

13 - Universal Precautions: Safety Training

EH&S – MGA

Goals: This safety session should teach you to:

- A. Know what bloodborne pathogens are and how they spread.
- B. Understand why and how to follow universal precautions.

OSHA Regulations: 29 CFR 1910.1030

1. The Bloodborne Pathogens Standard Helps Prevent Exposure to HIV and HBV

- A. Bloodborne pathogens are disease-causing microorganisms in blood and other body fluids.
 - 1. HIV is the bloodborne pathogen that causes AIDS and destroys the immune system, preventing the body from fighting disease.
 - 2. HBV, or Hepatitis B, is the bloodborne pathogen that infects the liver and can lead to such problems as cirrhosis or liver cancer.
 - 3. OSHA's Bloodborne Pathogens Standard covers the steps employers and employees must take to prevent exposure to possibly infected blood or other body fluids.
 - 4. The regulation applies to workers at health care facilities, emergency responders, law enforcement professionals, and others whose jobs could expose them to human body fluids.
 - 5. Note for those who work in hospitals: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends following "standard precautions," which expand precautions to reduce the risk of transmission of microorganisms from both recognized and unrecognized sources of infection in hospitals.

2. HIV and HBV Are Spread Through Direct, Not Casual, Contact; HIV and HBV are transmitted by:

- A. Sexual contact, shared drug needles, being stuck by an infected needle or other sharp instrument, or direct contact between broken or chafed skin and infected body fluids.
- B. HBV is also spread by contact with caked, dried blood and contaminated surfaces. HIV and HBV are not spread by:
- C. Coughing or sneezing, touching an infected person, or sharing equipment, materials, toilets, water fountains, or showers with an infected person

3. Universal Precautions Prevent the Spread of Bloodborne Infection

- A. Universal Precautions means: Treat all blood and body fluids as if they are infectious.

4. Universal Precautions Include Using PPE to Prevent Possibly Infectious Contact

- A. Wear gloves if there's a risk of direct contact with body fluids or with possibly contaminated items or surfaces.
- B. Bandage cuts or broken skin before putting on gloves.
- C. Wear eye and face protection if there's a risk of blood splashes or sprays.
- D. Wear protective clothing if there's a risk of contact with body fluids.
- E. Use only PPE that's been inspected for damage before wearing.
- F. Remove contaminated PPE carefully so contamination doesn't touch your skin.
- G. Dispose of contaminated PPE in proper containers so contamination can't spread.

5. Universal Precautions Include Good Hygiene

- A. Wash hands and exposed skin carefully with soap and water after exposure.
- B. Flush eyes, nose or mouth with water as soon as possible after contact with blood or potentially infectious materials.
- C. Don't eat, drink, smoke, apply cosmetics, or handle contact lenses in areas that could contain infectious materials.

6. Universal Precautions Include Avoiding Direct Contact With Sharps

- A. OSHA says to treat all sharps as though they're contaminated.
 - 1. Don't shear or break or bend needles.
 - 2. Don't reach your hand into a container that might contain sharps.
 - 3. Use tongs or a similar tool, not your hands, to clean up broken glass.
 - 4. Place all used sharps immediately in puncture-resistant, leakproof containers.

7. Apply Universal Precautions to Possibly Contaminated Materials and Surfaces; OSHA requires:

- A. Prompt and proper cleaning and decontamination for equipment or surfaces that have had contact with blood or potentially infectious materials
- B. Wearing gloves and using leakproof transport containers to handle laundry that may have had contact with blood or other potentially infectious fluids

Summation: Precautions Prevent Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens

Take care to avoid direct contact with blood or other body fluids and to thoroughly clean and decontaminate anything that does make that contact.