



RISK REMINDER

PARTNERING WITH TOWNSHIPS

BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS (BBP)

Safety At All Levels

Individuals who are infected with Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) or Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) may not show symptoms and may not know they are infectious. For this reason, all human blood and body fluids should be considered as if infectious, and all precautions should be taken to avoid contact. This simple rule is known as “universal precautions.”

In the workplace, bloodborne pathogens (BBP) may be transmitted when blood or other infectious body fluids come in contact with mucous membranes (your eyes, nose, mouth); non-intact skin (due to cuts, abrasions, burns, rashes, paper cuts); or by handling or touching contaminated materials or surfaces. Bloodborne pathogens are also transmitted by “injection” under the skin via a contaminated sharp object puncturing or cutting the skin causing a wound.

Hepatitis B Virus versus Human Immunodeficiency Virus:

- Hepatitis B Virus is more persistent than HIV and is able to survive for at least one week in dried blood on environmental surfaces. However, HIV will not survive for more than a few minutes when exposed to room temperature air, and will usually die within seconds.
- A teaspoon of infected blood may contain over one billion HBV particles, while a teaspoon of infected HIV blood contains about 15 HIV particles.
- Hepatitis B Virus usually has mild symptoms which makes diagnosis difficult. HIV infections usually are not diagnosed for years and symptoms may not appear for many months or years.
- Hepatitis B can be prevented with a vaccine. At the present time there is no preventive vaccine for HIV.
- No cure is presently available for HBV or HIV.

If you administer first aid to an injured person in the workplace and there is a potential for contacting any body fluids, you should adhere to the following “universal precaution” guidelines:

- Wear impervious gloves when there is a chance of exposure to blood or body fluids.
- Wear a face shield to protect your entire face, and safety goggles to provide the most complete eye protection.
- Use resuscitation devices when performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- Report all BBP exposures or potential exposures to your supervisor immediately.
- Immediately wash your hands and affected areas with soap and warm water.
- Flush your eyes, nose or other mucous membrane areas with water, if exposed.
- Wash down areas which body fluids may have been contacted with the use of a mild solution of household water and bleach (10:1).

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For more information, contact your Loss Control Consultant at (800) 252-5059, ext. 1387 or 1384.

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