

BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS

Bloodborne pathogens are microscopic infectious materials in blood or certain other body fluids that can cause disease in humans. Healthcare workers whose occupational duties expose them to blood and other potentially infectious materials (OPIM) are at risk of contacting any of these bloodborne pathogens. Hepatitis B, and C and HIV are three of the most significant of these diseases. See Appendix A for a list of bloodborne pathogens.

ROUTES OF INFECTION:

Airborne

Transmission of aerosols occurs by dissemination of either airborne droplets or by dust particles containing the infectious agent. Infectious organisms transmitted in this manner can be dispersed by air currents which can then be inhaled. Therefore, special air handling and ventilation systems are required to prevent airborne transmission.

Ingestion

Infectious organisms can be ingested when they come into contact with the mouth via splashes or sprays to the face. Therefore, the OSHA requirement of no food or drink in a clinical area or laboratory is based on the premise of ingestion through food or drink contamination.

Direct Inoculation

Direct inoculation occurs from contact with an object that may be contaminated with an infectious organism such as a puncture with a contaminated needle which is the most common occurrence. Laboratory exposures have been reduced since glassware has been replaced with plastic substitutes.

Mucous Membrane Contact

Involves the contact of the conjunctiva or the mucous membrane of the nose with contaminated organisms through large droplets or splashes.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

NSU shall ensure compliance with the OSHA regulations regarding bloodborne pathogens and the establishment of the Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control program.

The EH&S office shall be responsible for the following:

- The implementation of the exposure control program.
- Maintain, review and update the program at least annually and whenever necessary to include new or modified tasks and procedures.
- Provide initial and annual training to all faculty, employees and students who are at risk of exposure.
- Ensure the departments provide and maintain all necessary PPE, and engineering control.
- Investigate exposure incidents.
- Maintain all documentation of training and medical incidents.

The employee and student health office shall:

- Provide medical surveillance to include administration of the Hepatitis B vaccine and medical follow-up for exposures.

The departments shall be responsible for:

- Identify individuals who are at risk of exposure.

- Ensure that employees and students complete the required training.
- Provide PPE and engineering controls to eliminate or reduce exposure.
- Maintain a current Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control policy.
- Ensure "Universal Precautions" are followed.

Employees, faculty and students shall:

- Complete the provided training and understand the risk associated with the job.
- Consider seriously the offer of hepatitis B vaccination.
- Follow the appropriate practices and procedures established for the work environment to limit or prevent exposures, and adopt the principle of "Universal Precautions".
- Report any exposures to supervisory personnel and undertake the necessary medical evaluation and treatment.

Contractors and vendors:

Outside contractors must make a copy of their blood-borne pathogens program and their exposure control plan available to the EH&S office. Those who fail to follow the program requirements will be asked to leave the premises. Contractors with an insufficient program will not be allowed to begin work until their program meets or exceeds the requirements of this program. In areas where employees have been working with infectious materials, the area must be decontaminated before any construction or renovation can begin; this would apply to counter tops, cabinets and instrumentation surfaces. Vendors who are required to work, fix or maintain instrumentation which may be contaminated are required to wear PPE.