



Minnesota Electrical Association

Electrical Toolbox Talks

Bloodborne Pathogen Safety

Bloodborne pathogens are microorganisms present in human blood that can cause disease in humans such as the AIDS virus, hepatitis B virus and the like. It is easy to become exposed to these when you are giving first-aid help to others.

Employer will designate first-aid responders and train them in this OSHA standard. While Good Samaritan acts performed by undesignated employees are not covered by the OSHA standard, employers may want to make sure all of their employees receive training in the dangers of bloodborne pathogens and exposure control.

You are exposed when blood, urine, vomit, body fluids, or other potentially infectious material comes in contact with your eyes, mouth, any open sores, or mucus membranes in your body. While giving first aid is a life-giving thing to do, you could get a potentially fatal disease from this exposure if you don't protect yourself.

1. Employees will do whatever it takes to stop exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials when providing first aid. Employees will not touch any fluids without wearing plastic gloves or other non-absorbent protective materials.
2. Employees will wash their hands immediately after removing gloves or other protective equipment and after any hand contact with blood or potentially infectious fluids.
3. Employer will provide antiseptic cleansers for employees to use if a sink isn't available for hand washing. If employee uses an antiseptic cleanser, they will wash with soap and water as soon as possible.
4. Workers will always safely dispose of any personal protective equipment used in the process of giving first aid so no one else will be exposed to it.
5. Upon exposure to a bloodborne pathogen, employer requires that an immediate and confidential medical evaluation be conducted.
 - a. This evaluation must document how the exposure occurred, identify and test the source individual if possible, test the exposed employees blood if consent is obtained, provide counseling, and evaluate any reported illness.
 - b. The medical professional doing the exposure assessment must be provided with all relevant data needed to complete the employee's evaluation.
 - c. Hepatitis B vaccine should be given immediately after an exposure to any first-aid provider who has experienced an exposure to blood. (Employees who refuse to be vaccinated must sign a form declining vaccination and be provided with vaccination if they change their minds at a later date.)

Notes: For more information see OSHA 29 CFR 1910.1030, manufacturer's guidelines, a competent safety professional or the OSHA Consulting office.

These rules are samples only. Each employer is responsible for working with his/her employees to write rules that meet the specific needs of their individual company and type of work. Each employer is responsible for assessing the accuracy of their rules and keeping them up to date. OSHA requires a minimum of an update and employee re-training annually.

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