

Self Directed Training

Hazard

Communication

&

Bloodborne Pathogens

in the

Workplace

Hazard Communication (HAZCOM)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What does “Hazard Communication” mean?

Hazard Communication (HAZCOM) is the name under which employers use programs, plans and training to inform workers of the chemical hazards that exist in their workplaces.

Why is Hazard Communication necessary?

For your Protection. Using chemicals is an everyday occurrence in most jobs performed today. At some point during the workday, most employees will be exposed to a chemical or product that has physical or health hazards. The employee has both a need and the right to know what those hazards are in order to acquire protection.

It’s the Law. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued a standard requiring employers to identify hazardous chemicals in their workplaces, develop plans and procedures to keep employees safe while working around those chemicals, and to train employees on safe work practices. This OSHA standard is called “Hazard Communication” and is numbered 29 CFR 1910.1200.

What does the OSHA standard say?

The standard is quite lengthy and, therefore, is not included in this booklet, although this training addresses the requirements of the standard. However, you may review the entire standard, which is part of the Hazard Communication Plan developed by your employer for your safety. This training has been developed to meet the goals set by the standard for keeping you safe while working around chemicals.

Where are the standard and Hazard Communication Plan kept?

Each employer facility has a Hazard Communication Plan on its premises. The location at each facility is as follows:

Life Touch Hospice -----	SHARE Maintenance Director’s LTH office
LTH Magnolia office -----	Regional Patient Care Coordinator’s office
Administration -----	SHARE Maintenance Director’s Admin. office
Interfaith Clinic -----	IFC Executive Director’s office
Pride Youth Programs -----	Pride Executive Director’s office
Chaplaincy -----	Chaplaincy Director’s office
HealthWorks Fitness Center -----	HFC Maintenance Director’s office

Who is responsible for keeping us safe from chemical hazards at work?

Everyone!! First, it is the employer's responsibility to:

- Achieve and maintain compliance with the HAZCOM standard
- Provide employees with a safe and healthful workplace
- Minimize and/or reduce hazardous conditions
- Provide training and personal protective equipment

It is the employee's responsibility to:

- Follow the employer's safety and health rules (comply with standard)
- Wear or use all required personal protective equipment and practice safe behavior. (There are no excuses.)
- Report hazardous conditions immediately to your supervisor
- Report job related injuries and/or illnesses immediately to your supervisor

Hazardous Chemicals -- Operations

A chemical is considered hazardous if it is capable of negatively affecting your health after limited or long-term exposure. We usually think of "hazardous chemicals" as those which exist in chemical manufacturing plants. In fact, we are surrounded by hazardous chemicals, in varying strengths and quantities, daily.

Operations in your work area where hazardous chemicals are present are:

- Specified Chemical Storage area
- Break area and bathroom areas
- First-aid/medical storage areas
- Janitors/ housekeeping storage areas

Detecting the Presence or Release of a Hazardous Chemical in the Work Area

When a hazardous chemical is present or released in the work area, methods and observation may be used for detection. When working with or near hazardous chemicals, everyone should serve as a monitor for danger. Some warnings come through observation: clouds, vapor, dust, visual appearance or odor of hazardous chemicals when being released. In the event of a spill, accidental release or human contact incident, everyone in the area becomes a first responder. This response time is faster with early detection.

Labels and Other Forms of Warning

In-house containers of hazardous chemicals must be labeled, tagged or marked with the identity of the material and appropriate hazard warnings. Chemical manufacturers, importers, and distributors are required to ensure that every container of hazardous chemicals they ship is appropriately labeled with such information and with the name and address of the producer or other responsible party. If the material is subsequently transferred by the employer from a labeled container to another container, the second container must be labeled also. The secondary label must contain an identity for the material and appropriate hazard warnings. The identity is any term which appears on the label, the MSDS, and the list of chemicals, and thus links these three sources of information. The hazard warning is a brief statement of the hazardous effects of the chemical (“flammable”, “causes lung damage”) Labels must be legible, and prominently displayed. If you encounter an unlabeled container of any kind, report it to your supervisor at once.

Chemical Inventory and Analysis

An on-going inventory of hazardous chemicals must be conducted in your workplace. You can assist in this regard by noting the chemicals you regularly use or work with, and checking the Chemical Inventory List to make sure they are included. This list is contained in the Hazard Communication Plan (previously mentioned) and in another publication titled **HAZCOM MSDS**.

An analysis of the chemicals present in your workplace is conducted to ascertain safe handling and to limit exposure. This analysis is done utilizing the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) which is provided by the manufacturer. These MSDSs are included with the Chemical Inventory List, mentioned above, in the **HAZCOM MSDS** book.

Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)

Employers must have an MSDS for each hazardous chemical that they use. The MSDS is a detailed information bulletin prepared by the manufacturer or importer of a chemical. The MSDS must be in English and include the specific chemical’s identity. In addition, the MSDS must describe the following characteristics:

- Physical and chemical properties
- Physical and health hazards
- Routes of exposure
- Precaution for safe handling and use
- Emergency and first-aid procedures
- Control measures

Non-Routine Tasks

Before any non-routine task is performed, you will be advised by your supervisor of special precautions to follow concerning the hazardous chemicals that may be encountered. If you receive no instruction, you should ask your supervisor about it. If you still receive no instruction, contact your facility's Director prior to beginning the task.

In addition, any other personnel who could be exposed will be informed of this potential exposure by your supervisor.

Non-routine tasks are those which you normally do not perform and with which you are unfamiliar, such as handling certain hazardous chemicals or substances.

In the event such tasks are required, your supervisor will provide the following information about the activity as it relates to the specific chemicals expected to be encountered:

- Specific chemical names
- Hazards of the chemicals
- What personal protective equipment is required
- What safety measures are to be taken
- Emergency procedures
- Measures that have been taken to lessen the hazards, including ventilation, respirators, and the presence of other employees.

EMPLOYEE INFORMATION AND TRAINING

New employees will receive this HAZCOM training prior to beginning their job duties.

Just as the Chemical Inventory List will change with discontinued and new materials in your workplace, so will the MSDSs contained in the **HAZCOM MSDS** book. Additionally, before a new hazardous material is introduced into the operation, you will be notified immediately and receive additional training regarding the chemical, its hazards, routes of exposure, precautions for safe handling and use, emergency and first-aid procedures, and control measures.

OUTSIDE CONTRACTORS

Your facility is responsible for providing other personnel or outside contractors with the following information:

- Hazardous chemicals they may be exposed to while in the workplace
- The hazard labels used, including any symbolic or numerical labeling system
- Location of MSDS's for all hazardous chemicals
- Precautionary measures to lessen the possibility of exposure
- Procedures to follow if they are exposed

The facility Director will also be responsible for contacting each contractor before work is started and finding out what chemicals the contractor is bringing into the workplace. If employees are to be exposed to these chemicals, those affected will be informed.

METHODS OF PROTECTION FROM CHEMICAL HAZARDS

Each Share Foundation agency strives to fulfill its responsibility for a safe work environment for its employees and visitors. To this end, methods of protection from chemical hazards have been adopted. These methods are:

- Complying with the Hazard Communication Standard
- Utilizing appropriate work practices to eliminate exposure
- Developing emergency procedures
- Providing task-appropriate protective equipment
- Maintaining just-in-time inventories of hazardous chemicals
- Training employees concerning chemical hazards and exposure prevention

Bloodborne Pathogens in the Workplace

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are bloodborne pathogens?

Bloodborne pathogens are all known diseases transmitted by blood.

Why am I receiving this training?

For your Protection – Your occupation and workplace bring you into contact with many people. The situations and types of activities that take place in your work can cause exposure to these pathogens.

It's the Law – The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued a standard (1910.1030) in 1992 to protect the more than 5 million health care workers in the United States at risk for occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens, such as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and hepatitis B virus (HBV). Although the chances of contracting a disease transmitted by blood are relatively low, they are real. Each year, more than 300 workers die of hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection. Each year, a small but significant number of health care workers are found to have human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection attributable to occupational exposure. Transmission of these infections is preventable. Working together, employers and employees can help halt the spread of these diseases in the workplace. **Employees in all segments of industry where occupational exposure is possible are covered by these regulations.**

What is “Occupational Exposure”?

Occupational exposure means reasonably anticipated skin, eye, mucous membrane or parenteral (ie needlestick) contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials that results from the performance of an employee's duties.

MAJOR BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS: HIV and HBV

The viruses of greatest concern at present are hepatitis B and HIV. However, cases of hepatitis C (HCV) and hepatitis D (HDV) have risen at significant rates over the past few years. Therefore, information is being provided regarding them also.

HIV

The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is the virus that causes AIDS. The signs of HIV infection are extremely variable. Persons infected with HIV are initially asymptomatic for an average of 10 years. The manifestations of AIDS that may eventually develop include a decreased cellular immune response, a variety of opportunistic infections, and cancer. HIV is transmitted in the blood and other body fluids such as semen and cervical secretions. Exposure to tears or saliva and other casual forms of contact have not been found to transmit the virus.

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is far more common than HIV and is present in very high concentrations in the blood of infected patients. The high blood concentrations give HBV a greater likelihood of infecting exposed persons. In contrast to HIV, which causes infection in only about 1 in 250 exposure incidents, HBV may cause infection in up to 1 of 3 exposures. Of those who become infected, only about one-third become symptomatic. Flu-like symptoms and jaundice are clinical clues to hepatitis B infection. A few asymptomatic infected individuals can be chronic carriers of the virus, unwittingly infecting others.

Hepatitis C and Hepatitis D

Long term effects of HCV and HDV infections are possible liver damage, cirrhosis and liver failure.

Transmission of HIV, HBV, HCV and HDV

Typical routes of transmission are:

- Needlestick injuries
- Blood contact with a preexisting portal of entry (such as a scratch or cut)
- Blood contact with a mucous membrane (mouth, nose or eye).

Similar contact with other potentially infectious materials (listed in the following section) or regulated waste can also result in transmission of these viruses.

Potentially Infectious Materials

OSHA has defined three types of potentially infectious materials other than blood.

- 1 Human body fluids:
 - Semen
 - Vaginal secretions
 - Cerebrospinal, synovial, pleural, pericardial, peritoneal and amniotic fluids
 - Saliva in dental procedures
 - Any body fluid visibly contaminated with blood
 - Any undetermined body fluid
- 2 Unfixed human tissue or organ
- 3 Blood, organs, or tissues from infected experimental animals as well as cultures or solutions containing HIV and HBV

Regulated waste includes blood and other potentially infectious materials as well as items contaminated with and capable of releasing them. Contaminated sharps and items caked with dried blood are examples of regulated waste.

Universal Precautions

The concept of Universal Precautions, which recommends that all blood and potentially infectious materials other than blood must be handled as if infected, is a basic tenet of the OSHA regulations.

THE HEPATITIS B VACCINE

A safe and effective vaccine is available to protect workers from hepatitis B. While the vaccine has been available for some time, employers are now required to offer it free of charge to personnel at risk. You are not required to receive the vaccine. Any at-risk employee who wishes not to receive the vaccine must sign a copy of the Hepatitis B Vaccine Declination. If you later decide to receive the vaccine, the employer must still offer it to you free of charge.

EXPOSURE CONTROL PLAN

Each employer facility is required to develop a written Exposure Control Plan. The plan's goal is to eliminate or minimize exposures to infectious materials.

The plan includes a list of job classifications in which employees risk occupational exposure. Any worker who may have contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials is included. The determination must also list the procedures or circumstances in which occupational exposure can occur. The list of jobs and procedures are based on risks incurred without use of personal protective equipment. Also included in the plan are methods for protecting and training you.

ENGINEERING CONTROLS

Engineering controls, with work practice controls and personal protective equipment, function together to eliminate or minimize exposure incidents.

Engineering controls are items designed to isolate or keep infectious material away from you, co-workers, and members. All engineering controls must be well maintained and inspected regularly. These controls include the following:

Hand washing facilities must be readily accessible to staff wherever occupational exposure may occur. Alternatives to hand washing facilities must be made available. Use of antiseptic hand cleanser and clean towels or towelettes is an acceptable short-term solution. Workers must wash their hands with soap and running water as soon as possible after exposure.

Containers for used sharps are also required as engineering controls. The containers must meet the following requirements:

- They must be puncture resistant and leak-proof on the sides and bottom
- They must be labeled or color coded so that they can be readily identified by staff.
- They must be located as close as possible to the places where sharps are used and be easily accessible.
- Reusable containers must be designed so that they can be emptied without risk to the person emptying them.

Containers for other regulated waste. Other regulated waste, such as used disposable gloves, must be kept in closed containers that can hold all contents without leakage during handling, storage, and transport. The waste must be color coded or labeled.

Note: Just as you teach yourself to drive defensively; you must train yourself to think defensively about handling potentially infectious materials. As in defensive driving, you will be better prepared for mishaps by thinking ahead and recognizing risky situations.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Personal protective equipment is designed to protect employees from direct contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials. These include:

- Gloves
- Gowns and laboratory coats
- Face shields or masks
- Eye protection
- Mouthpieces, resuscitation bags, pocket masks, and other ventilation devices

Personal protective equipment is provided free of charge (unless it is used outside the workplace for personal use, then employee may own the PPE), pay to maintain, clean, and replace all PPE regardless of ownership.

Employers are responsible for personal protective equipment selection, but allow employees to try different types of PPE when available for input on quality, durability, proper fit, comfort, options, style, ease of use and disinfection. In all cases fitness for use will determine PPE selection.

When to Use Personal Protective Equipment

Use of these items will depend on the situation for which protection is needed.

Gloves: In situations where you can reasonably anticipate hand contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials, you must wear gloves. Employees who are allergic to latex gloves are provided latex-free gloves as a suitable alternative. Never wear the same pair of gloves to treat more than one patient. Disposable gloves are intended for single use only. They may not be decontaminated and reused.

If a pair of gloves is damaged so that it is no longer an effective barrier, even within a single task, replace them immediately. If they become contaminated, replace them as soon as soon as possible.

Utility gloves: May be decontaminated and reused as long as they continue to provide a functional barrier. However, if they are cracked, peeling, torn, punctured, or otherwise deteriorated, they must be replaced.

Face protection: Face protection is required when droplets of blood or other potentially infectious materials may splash or spray during a procedure. Coverage of both upper and lower halves of the face is important, since eyes, noses, and mouths are all potential portals of entry for viruses. Masks may be used in tandem with eye protection devices (goggles or glasses with solid side shields). Chin-length face shields may also be worn.

Respiratory equipment: Mouthpieces, resuscitation bags, and other ventilation equipment must be made available so that mouth-to-mouth resuscitation can be avoided.

WORK PRACTICE CONTROLS

Work Practice Controls are rules that ensure employees work in the safest way possible. Many are necessarily related to engineering controls, specifying how they can best be used by staff. Others are simply procedural guides.

Hand washing: Wash your hands as soon as possible after removal of gloves or other personal protective equipment. Never assume that wearing gloves, for example, is foolproof protection. Even if the integrity of a glove is not compromised, the act of taking it off can lead to exposure.

After any skin or mucous membrane contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials, wash the affected area with soap and water. You should use an antiseptic hand cleanser when running water is not immediately available. You are still required to wash with running water as soon as possible thereafter.

Sharp: Needlesticks are the most common type of occupational exposure in the health care setting. Bending, breaking, and recapping used sharps is prohibited. Used needles or sharps must be placed in an appropriate receptacle for disposal. The required puncture-proof sharps containers are described in the section on Engineering Controls. The containers must be kept upright during use and must not be allowed to overfill.

Eating, drinking and hygiene: Do not eat or drink in work areas where there is any risk of occupational exposure. The rule extends also to smoking, applying cosmetics, and handling contact lenses.

Equipment: Equipment that can become contaminated is also regulated by OSHA. Before any equipment that might be contaminated is used, repaired or shipped, it must be inspected for blood or other potentially infectious material. If any infectious material is present and the equipment can be contaminated, it must be decontaminated prior to use, service or shipment. If the contaminated equipment cannot be decontaminated, a label must be placed on it that clearly indicates the site(s) of contamination and placed out of service.

Routine cleaning: Housekeeping procedures are covered by the OSHA standard. Your agency Director has developed a written schedule for when cleaning and decontamination is required. However, when equipment or surfaces come in overt contact with potentially infectious material, they must be cleaned and decontaminated with an appropriate disinfectant as soon as possible.

Broken glass: Never pick up by hand any broken glassware that may be contaminated. Sharp edges could easily break the skin, allowing pathogens to enter. Recommended mechanical means of cleanup include the use of a brush and dust pan, tongs, or forceps.

When cleanup is complete, the used brush, dustpan, tongs, or forceps must be thoroughly cleaned and decontaminated before use.

Sharps containers: Sharps containers must be puncture proof and leak-proof. Great care should be taken in moving sharps containers; they must be closed to prevent spilling. If there is any danger of leakage, they should be placed in a closable, leak proof container that is appropriately color coded or labeled.

Other regulated waste must also be placed in closable, leak proof containers that are labeled or color coded. If any of these containers becomes contaminated on the outside, it should be placed in a second similar container.

Laundry: Handle contaminated laundry as little as possible. Bag or place contaminated laundry in a container at the place where it was used. If the laundry is wet or may soak through its container it must be placed in a leak-proof container. Laundry which becomes contaminated at your workplace facility is considered hazardous waste, and its disposal should follow those guidelines.

Note: Engineering Controls, Personal Protective Equipment, and Work Practice Controls are designed to work together to protect you. With your employer, you will need to actively think about which controls to use under what circumstances. Your participation helps ensure that co-workers and clients alike have the lowest possible risk of infection at all times.

FOLLOW-UP OF EXPOSURE AND CONTAMINATION INCIDENTS

Exposure Incidents

When an exposure incident occurs, the following three steps must be taken immediately:

- Cleanse the area of exposure to minimize the chance of infection.
- Notify the designated contact person for exposure incidents to begin documenting what happened.
- Seek medical treatment and evaluation.

If an exposure incident occurs you must report it to the agency Director at once. You will receive confidential medical evaluation and follow-up at no charge, which will be performed or supervised by a licensed health care professional. All laboratory tests will be done by an accredited laboratory at no cost.

A written evaluation will be made which will include:

- A written report on the route of exposure and circumstances surrounding the incident.
- Identification of source individual, where possible.
- HIV and HBV blood test of source individual.
- Written documentation of evaluation and medical follow-up, including results of employee serological testing for HIV and HBV.
- The exposed employee has the right to refuse blood collection and/or testing. If the exposed employee gives consent for blood collection but not for HIV testing, the blood must be kept for 90 days, during which time the employee can choose to have the sample tested.
- Appropriate post-exposure preventive treatment must be offered. These include immune globulin for Hepatitis B. Treatment for AIDS should be in accordance with the latest Centers for Disease Control guidelines.
- Counseling and evaluation of any reported illnesses will be provided.

Post-exposure and Evaluation Medical Records

Employers are required to keep confidential medical records for all employees with occupational exposure.

Contamination Incidents

Body fluids, including blood, feces, and vomit are all considered potentially contaminated with bloodborne germs. Therefore, spills of these fluids should be cleaned up and the contaminated surfaces disinfected immediately.

One of the most commonly used chemicals for disinfection is a homemade solution of household bleach and water. Since a solution of bleach and water loses its strength quickly, it should be mixed fresh before each clean-up to make sure it is effective.

Recipe for Bleach Disinfecting Solution

9 parts cool water
1 part household bleach

Add the household bleach to the water. Gently mix the solution.

Clean-up Procedure Using Bleach Solution

- Block off the area of the spill until cleanup and disinfection is complete.
- Put on disposable latex gloves to prevent contamination of hands.
- Wipe up the spill using paper towels or absorbent material, and place in a plastic garbage bag.
- Gently pour bleach solution onto all contaminated areas of the surface.
- Let the bleach solution remain on the contaminated area for 20 minutes.
- Wipe up the remaining bleach solution.

- All non-disposable cleaning materials used, such as mops and scrub brushes, should be disinfected by saturating with bleach solution and air dried.
- Remove gloves and place in plastic garbage bag with all soiled cleaning materials.
- Double-bag and securely tie up plastic garbage bags and discard.
- Thoroughly wash hands with soap and water.
- Notify the agency Director to begin documenting what happened.

Universal Precautions must be observed as part of the spill clean-up.

COMMUNICATION OF HAZARDS TO EMPLOYEES

Labels and color codes ensure that anyone who may come in contact with a contaminated object knows they must handle it with care. OSHA has chosen the fluorescent biohazard sign as the appropriate label marking, with red as the color code. They can be attached by string, wire, adhesive, or some other method to keep them from falling off accidentally. They can also be a part of the container itself; for example, red bags or red containers can be substituted for labels. Containers of regulated waste must be labeled or color coded.



BIOHAZARD

TRAINING AND INFORMATION PROGRAMS

After the initial training, annual training updates will also be required. When changes are made to tasks or procedures that affect an employee's occupational exposure, the worker will need to receive additional training in these new areas.