

Worksite: _____ Instructor: _____ Date/Time: _____

Topic C044: Bloodborne (and other) Pathogens

Introduction: A *pathogen* is any microscopic organism, specifically a bacteria, germ, virus, or parasite that is able to cause disease in a human being. The term *blood borne* infers being contained or carried in blood, blood-contaminated material, or blood produced bodily fluids. Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and hepatitis B merit serious concern for workers occupationally exposed to blood, other potentially infectious materials or bodily fluids.

There are several ways a person might encounter a blood borne pathogen in the work-place, but the primary concern would be while rendering first aid to a co-worker who has sustained a bleeding injury.

*When First Responder care is given to a person with bleeding injuries, special attention must be given to the use of appropriate **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**. Always assume that blood is contaminated. During the initial first aid procedures when blood or bodily fluids are involved, take special precautions to avoid touching bare, unprotected skin surfaces to blood or other contaminated objects. Post-event personal hygiene and site clean-up with antibacterial soap and antiseptic spray as well as proper disposal of contaminated material is extremely important.*

Always assume that blood is contaminated. Wear the appropriate PPE (such as latex gloves or face masks). During the initial first aid procedures when blood or bodily fluids are involved, take special precautions to avoid contact with potentially contaminated substances.

Employers must make available to employees with a reasonable expectation of exposure to blood borne pathogens (such as the designated first aid provider) a vaccination for Hepatitis B, and should make confidential follow-up medical testing and inoculation available at no cost to any employees involved. If such treatment or aftercare is declined by the affected employees, a written signed statement that documents such must be obtained.

Many additional "Pathogens" exist in and around the workplace. These microbial monsters thrive around sanitary facilities, especially Porta-Johns, during warm summer weather and it is important that all sanitary facilities be kept clean. On occasion, contaminated water sources turn up in a workplace. Always ensure that your drinking water supply is clean, fresh, and safe. Avoid sharing drinking cups or using community drinking containers.

Special precautions must also be taken with food. Food poisoning in the form of Botulism or Ptomaine is not a pleasant experience and is most prevalent during hot summer months. Food poisoning is caused by ingesting food that contains toxic substances produced by bacteria. These toxins are some of the most potent poisons known and can severely damage nerves and muscles. Even minute amounts of these toxins entering the body by ingestion, inhalation, or absorption through the eye or a break in the skin can cause serious illness. If it is apparent a person is acutely affected, they should be taken to the hospital immediately.

There are many real Pathogen-related health hazards associated with insect bites. The transfer of viruses and bacteria by bloodsucking insects can cause disease. Some of the bloodsuckers are: Mosquitoes, ticks, fleas, and bed-bugs. Some of the more serious diseases they can transfer are Lyme's Disease, Malaria, Bubonic Plague, Yellow Fever, and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, to name just a few. Standing puddles of stagnant water are breeding grounds for these insects. Again, good housekeeping measures are required to keep insects, rodents, or other vermin who are attracted to rubbish, away from the work-place.

Conclusion: It is impossible to avoid contact with all pathogenic organisms because they exist literally by the millions. It is possible is to be aware of their presence and knowledgeable of the environments they prefer and to understand the processes required to avoid contact, contamination, and infection.

Employee Attendance: (Names or signatures of personnel who are attending this meeting)

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These guidelines do not supersede local, state, or federal regulations and must not be construed as a substitute for, or legal interpretation of, any OSHA regulations.