

Bloodborne Pathogens: A Facility Tour

5-Minute Talk

Overview of topic

Rendering first aid is a life-giving thing to do and trying to help is a natural human response. However, even when providing knowledgeable first aid, if your workers don't protect themselves, they risk exposing themselves to harmful and sometimes deadly pathogens from blood or other potentially infectious materials. To protect them, they need to follow the first aid and bloodborne pathogens program set up by your company.

Hazard awareness

This is a good opportunity to familiarize workers, regardless of their function, with the biohazard symbol and the respect required for containers or bags with this symbol. All warning labels must bear the biohazard symbol, printed in fluorescent orange or orange-red, and have lettering of a contrasting color. Red bags or containers may be used as a substitute for labels.

Exposure control plan

The regulation under 29 CFR 1910.1030(c)(1)(iii) requires that you make a copy of the Exposure Control Plan (ECP) available to employees at a reasonable time, place, and location. While exposure control plans will vary from workplace to workplace, they have some common elements:

- Identification of job classifications and tasks where there is exposure to blood and other potentially infectious materials.
- A schedule of how and when the provisions of the standard will be implemented, including schedules and methods for communication of hazards to employees, hepatitis B vaccination, post-exposure evaluation and follow-up, recordkeeping, and implementation of: engineering and work practice controls, personal protective equipment (PPE), and housekeeping.
- The procedure for the evaluation of circumstances surrounding exposure incidents.

Personal protective equipment

Disposable gloves are probably the most common type of PPE used in first aid situations. Various other types of PPE include plastic visors, half-face masks, full body gown, goggles, etc. Whatever it takes to stop exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials is the level of PPE your responders should wear when they provide first aid.



Employee training

OSHA regulations contain detailed training requirements. At 29 CFR 1910.1030(g)(2), the rules say:

- You must make sure that all employees with occupational exposure participate in a training program at no cost to the employee and during working hours.
- Training must be provided at the time of initial assignment to tasks where occupational exposure may take place and at least annually thereafter.
- You must also provide additional training when changes such as modification of tasks or procedures or institution of new tasks or procedures affect the employee's occupational exposure. The additional training may be limited to addressing the new exposures created.
- The rule contains detailed requirements regarding the content and elements that must be included in the training, as well as additional training requirements for employees in HIV and HBV laboratories and production facilities.

Training tips

Inform trainees of the following, as applicable:

- The location of biohazard materials in your facility.
- The location of all hand washing facilities, including portable facilities.
- The location of the ECP at your facility.
- The availability and location of PPE.

Although your company may need an ECP, you have to decide if workers need to be given a copy of the entire plan during this training. You should emphasize again that they have a right to see the plan. You may want to develop a handout with excerpts affecting different groups of employees. Tailor handouts to include the greater detail required by your group of first responders.

Where to go for more information

OSHA regulations at 29 CFR 1910.1030, Bloodborne pathogens

