

Facilities Safety

Toolbox Talk

Bloodborne Pathogens



Bloodborne Pathogens (BBP) are devastating diseases for anyone that is sick with a BBP. Fortunately, these exposures are rare in the average workplace. Personnel who treat patients infected with a BBP in a clinical setting are at higher risk than employees who work in non-clinical workplaces. While BBP's are not routinely transmitted by typical workplace activities, care must ALWAYS be taken to prevent exposure to human material because we cannot know when it could expose us to a BBP. OSHA requires the use of Universal Precautions because we must always assume that any human material could be infectious.

Spilled human material requires careful clean-up, such as when someone experiences profuse bleeding or gets sick in a public space. Splashing of human material may occur when un-clogging a toilet or snaking a drain. Sloppy practices when cleaning human material can also create splashes.

Do not allow the material to get on you so it cannot get in you. Concerning human material includes blood, vomit, diarrhea, other body fluids or unfixed tissues especially materials with visible blood. 'Unfixed' refers to the fact that the material has not been exposed to chemical or other decontamination process to kill any infectious organisms in the human origin material.

See below for some pointers for the prevention of BBP exposures:

1. If you think the material that you are about to handle or cleanup is of human origin, ALWAYS use Universal Precautions
2. Universal Precautions includes using PPE and appropriate work practices.
3. Gloves top the list of PPE to use for BBP exposure prevention. If any sprays or splashes could occur, PPE can include overalls, face shield, goggles, hair cover and booties.
4. Proper work practices are used to avoid sprays or splashes of human material. Spray the cloth before cleaning up human material to avoid aerosolizing bacteria or virus from the spilled material
5. Properly remove PPE so that the dirty side does not touch skin or clothing.
6. Wash hands immediately after removing PPE. Use soap and water or packaged handwipes. Alcohol based gel hand sanitizer can be used after washing hands.



Think ahead. Do a risk assessment before any task that might involve handling or cleaning human material to determine the most appropriate PPE and safest work practices for the task.

Follow your Department's written plan and hands-on training closely to avoid an exposure or injury while dealing with human material.