

Veterinary Loss Prevention Program

Infectious Pathogen Safety in the Veterinary Setting



Bloodborne Pathogen Safety in the Veterinary Setting

Trainer's Overview

To have your employees get the most out of their training sessions, it is suggested that:

- **The training sessions should be conducted in a relatively quiet uninterrupted environment.**
- **The sessions should be held the same time and day of the month (i.e., first Tuesday at 12:30).**
- **Employee handouts should be given out along with pencils/pens.**
- **Review the trainers guide, employee handout and any references.**
- **Keep the sessions to a maximum of 20 minutes.**
- **Give personal examples of incidents or prevention techniques that worked for you.**
- **Ensure all employees present sign the Safety Training Sign-in Sheet for documentation purposes.**
- **If some employees were not present, a second training session should be given.**

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Regulations

In California there are a number of regulations designed to protect employees from infectious pathogens. The major standard to protect from human blood exposure is the Bloodborne Pathogen (BBP) Standard. As a note, the Cal-OSHA and Federal OSHA Bloodborne Pathogen standards are not identical.

Cal-OSHA Bloodborne pathogen. General Industry Safety order 5193.

<http://www.dir.ca.gov/Title8/5193.html>

References

- Federal OSHA Interpretation of the applicability of Bloodborne Pathogens standard to Veterinary clinics: http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=INTERPRETATIONS&p_id=24608
- Federal OSHA Interpretation of the Occupational Exposure of Good Samaritans giving first aid in a non-medical situation: http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=INTERPRETATIONS&p_id=24011
- Compendium of Veterinary Standard Precautions for Zoonotic Disease Prevention in Veterinary Personnel. National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians: <http://www.nasphv.org/Documents/VeterinaryStandardPrecautions.pdf>
- Model Infection Control Plan for Veterinary Practices, 2008 – National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians: <http://www.nasphv.org/Documents/ModelInfectionControlPlan.doc>

Background

The Bloodborne Pathogen standard applies to employees who may have **occupational exposures** to:

- Human blood,
- Human blood components,
- Products made from human blood,
- Human fluids called other potentially infectious materials (OPIM). These include following human body fluids: semen, vaginal secretions, cerebrospinal fluid, synovial fluid, pleural fluid, pericardial fluid, peritoneal fluid, amniotic fluid, saliva in dental procedures, any other body fluid that is visibly contaminated with blood such as saliva or vomitus, and all body fluids in situations where it is difficult or impossible to differentiate between body fluids such as emergency response.
- Experimental human or animal cells, tissues, organs, blood etc. that are reasonably likely to contain or be contaminated with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), or Hepatitis B or C Virus (HBV or HCV).

In a normal veterinary setting the potential exposure to human blood is normally related to the emergency response and cleanup of human blood where human blood is released through an animal bite or scratch, needle stick, scalpel laceration or other type of accidental injury.

The Bloodborne Pathogen Standard applies to ***all reasonably anticipated occupational exposures to blood or OPIM.*** Any employee with collateral duties and trained to provide first aid or cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) to injured personnel is considered to have potential skin, eye, mucous membrane, or parenteral (i.e., piercing the skin by needles or bites) contact and exposure to blood or OPIM, and is covered by the standard.

However, if an employee is providing first aid or CPR as a Good Samaritan and not as a trained first aider, designated to perform first aid by the employer, that employee is not covered by the standard. Therefore, if an employee has an exposure incident while acting as a Good Samaritan, the employer is not required by the standard to provide the HBV vaccination series, post-exposure evaluation, follow-up procedures according to the current U.S. Public Health Service guidelines, or any other protections of the standard, although OSHA encourages employers to do so. (See Federal OSHA Interpretation regarding good Samaritans).

Exposure Control Plan

Each employer having an employee with occupational exposure shall establish, implement, and maintain an effective Exposure Control Plan designed to eliminate or minimize employee exposure to BBPs.

Key elements of the Exposure Control Plan include making an exposure determination of all the jobs and tasks performed by employees, which have reasonably anticipated exposures; developing, and implementing compliance methods through engineering controls and safe work practices; offering HBV vaccination; hazard communication; and recordkeeping.

BBP also requires initial and annual employee training, handling biohazardous waste in closable and labeled containers, and cleaning and decontamination of the work site after an exposure incident to blood or OPIM.

Even though the Bloodborne Pathogen standard does not apply to the typical veterinary situation involving animal blood or body fluids, or Good Samaritan interactions, it is required whenever there is a risk of employee exposure to human blood or OPIM from treating a fellow employee for sharps injuries or animal bites or scratches that break the skin or mucous membranes as part of their job duties.

Universal Precautions for Contact with Human Blood

Universal Precautions is an approach to infection control. According to the concept of Universal Precautions, all human blood and certain human body fluids are to be treated as if known to be infectious for HIV, HBV, HCV and other bloodborne pathogens.

Anytime that an employee is confronted with a good Samaritan first aid situation they should institute Universal Precautions. That way when approaching an

accident victim you do not want to come in direct contact with their blood or OPIM – no matter if you know the person or not.

Universal Precautions could include at a minimum gloves and also might include eye and face protection with spurring blood. Where occupational exposure remains after implementing engineering and work practice controls, your employer must provide, at no cost to you, appropriate personal protective equipment such as, but not limited to, gloves, gowns, laboratory coats, face shields or masks and eye protection, and mouthpieces, resuscitation bags, pocket masks, or other ventilation devices.

A good example of this is watching an EMT's approach to an accident situation. They take their time, put on their gloves and any other personal protection they might need **before** touching the person.

Universal Precautions - Part of Infection Control of your establishment

Though the Cal-OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens standard does not cover potential risk from transmission of bloodborne diseases from animals to humans it does not mean that standard precautions or "universal precautions" should not be taken where there is exposure to animal blood or OPIM from animals.

Standard Infection Control Procedures such as those controls listed by the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians should be implemented. (See the link to the Model Infection Control Plan).

Safety Tips

Workplace Controls

- Treat all human blood and other potential infectious materials (OPIM) as if they contained HIV, HBV or HCV.
- Universal precautions should always be practiced – even when you know the person. The co-worker that you have known for many years may not even know they have a disease.
- Ensure that you have a first aid kit with a CPR breathing barrier (one-way valve).

- All sharps should be properly disposed of.
- Never bend, recap or break a used (contaminated) needle.
- If you find a needle lying around - it might have been discarded by a client. Think of it being contaminated with HIV, HBV or HCV by the client. Be very cautious and pick it up without the possibility of being stuck. Dispose of it properly in a sharps container. When any doubt, contact your supervisor.
- Broken glass should be picked up with mechanical means, such as a broom and dust pan, not by hands.

Questions for Discussion

- Question: How should you treat all human blood or OPIM Answer – Like they were contaminated with HIV, HBV or HCV.
- Question: What is the concept of treating all human blood or OPIM as if it were contaminated with HIV, HBV or HCV called? Answer – Universal Precautions.
- Question: Does the BBP standard apply to a veterinary practice? Answer – It is required whenever there is a risk of employee exposure to human blood or OPIM from treating a fellow employee for sharps injuries or animal bites or scratches that break the skin or mucous membranes as part of their job duties.

Questions?

Please complete the Sign-In sheet.

Attendance record

Date: _____ Trainer: _____

Signature:

Print name

Bloodborne Pathogens in the Veterinary Setting

Employee Handout

- Treat all human blood and other potential infectious materials (OPIM) as if they contained HIV or HBV.
- Universal precautions should always be practiced – even when you know the person. The co-worker that you have known for many years may not even know they have a disease.
- Universal Precautions is an approach to infection control. According to the concept of Universal Precautions, all human blood and certain human body fluids are to be treated as if known to be infectious for HIV, HBV, HCV and other bloodborne pathogens.
- Disinfect the area thoroughly – following your supervisor’s directions.
- All sharps should be properly disposed of.
- Never bend, recap or break a used (contaminated) needle.
- If you find a needle lying around - it might have been discarded by a client. Think of it being contaminated with HIV/HBV by the client. Be very cautious and pick it up without the possibility of being stuck. Dispose of it properly in a sharps container. When any doubt, contact your supervisor.
- Broken glass should be picked up with a broom and dustpan, or some other mechanical means (not by hands).

