
8.1.26 Exposure Controls for Blood and Bodily Fluid

Purpose

The purpose of these Safe Work Practices and Procedures is to prevent communicable disease transmission in the event of employee exposure to blood and other bodily fluids.

Roles and Responsibilities

In accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act, employers and employees share responsibility for working safely. When providing the required support for students, especially for medical and personal care, the roles and responsibilities outlined from the OHS Act are:

- The SSRSB will take every reasonable precaution to:
 - a. Ensure employee and student health and safety. This includes assessing any risks for students and staff associated with the exposure to blood and other bodily fluids.
 - b. Provide and keep equipment associated with preventing disease transmission available and in proper and safe condition.
 - c. Provide necessary information, instruction and training required to perform job safely.
 - d. Provide necessary supervision. Supervisors will communicate and reinforce expectations for fulfillment of job functions, including following established routine practices to prevent disease transmission. Any concerns brought forward by employees are to be addressed promptly and collaborative solutions sought. Performance issues will be handled in accordance with applicable union or employment contracts.
 - e. Ensure that all employees are familiar with any health or safety hazards.
 - f. Ensure that employees are familiar with the proper use of devices, equipment and clothing required for their protection.
 - g. Consult and cooperate with the Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee.
- Every employee, while at work, shall:
 - a. Cooperate with SSRSB and take every reasonable precaution, in the circumstances, to protect their own and everyone's safety.
 - b. Take reasonable precaution in the circumstances to ensure any protective devices, equipment or clothing associated with preventing disease transmission provided by the employer is used or worn as instructed. Any challenges in doing so are to be reported to their Supervisor immediately.

- c. Consult and cooperate with the Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee.
- d. Report immediately to a Supervisor if any condition, equipment or aspect associated with routine practices to prevent disease transmission may be dangerous to the employee or any other person's health or safety. If the matter is not resolved to the employee's satisfaction, they shall refer to the SSRSB Complaint Procedure found in the OHS Program Manual.

Definitions:

Bodily fluids: Any fluid in the body such as blood, urine, saliva, sputum, semen, or feces.

Communicable Disease: is a disease in which the causative agents may be passed or carried from one person or another, directly or indirectly. A detailed list can be found in the Nova Scotia Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Conditions Regulations, Schedule A, Part 1.

Disposable: Items to be thrown out following one use.

Mucous Membranes: These are layers of epithelial tissue that covers a deeper layer of connective tissue which line cavities or canals of the body that open to the outside. Examples include nostrils, lips, eyelids and ears. They protect the underlying structure, secrete mucous and absorb water and salts.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Equipment worn by the employee to minimize the risk of exposure by creating a barrier between the worker and any source of infectious material. Examples include gloves, gowns, aprons, masks, eye wear, mouth barriers.

Sharps: Items that must be disposed of in a sharps container. Includes such things as needles, syringes, IV tubing, lancets, scalpel blades

Route of entry: The path by which infection may enter the body such as open cuts/abrasions, mucous membranes, sexual contact, indirect transmission, stab wounds from sharp objects.

Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS): A legal requirement that provides a workplace system for the safe use of hazardous materials (including cleaning chemicals). WHMIS provides labelling, storage, use, classifications, documentation and training requirements for any employee who works in or around hazardous materials.

Assessing Risks:

Exposure to blood and bodily fluid can occur in many ways. In the general delivery of school activities, safe work practices will focus on protection from direct contact (touching the blood or bodily fluid) and indirect contact (touching something that has been exposed to blood or bodily fluid). Employees must treat all blood, bodily fluids, and items that have been in contact with blood and bodily fluids with caution to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. All employees (Janitors, Custodians, Teachers, Resource Teachers, Teacher Assistants, Administrators, First Aid Attendants, Administrative Assistants, Bus Drivers, and support staff) have a potential for exposure under any of the following-situations:

- sick students or employees – vomit, diarrhea, mucus membranes
- injured students or employees – cuts or open wounds, nose bleeds, CPR
- students requiring personal care – toileting, diapering, care for sores
- students requiring medical care – needle use, catheters

All employees need to evaluate the risks of communicable disease exposure in every situation by taking into account:

- The time required to complete the task
- Types of bodily fluid that staff may come in contact with
- The possibility and route of entry for infection
- Environment in which the task is to be carried out
- Preventative measures to be taken for self and others

Controlling Risks:

Preventative measures fall under the following categories:

1. Engineering Controls:

- a. Sharps disposal containers – containers are the personal responsibility of the individual using the needle or sharp. Arrangements are to be made for the family to obtain sharps containers from local pharmacies and for them to pick up the container for safe disposal when full or the individual no longer requires it. Containers should be located in a secure, but accessible location. Sharps are to be discarded in designated container immediately after use. Do not overfill container.
- b. Tools for handling sharps, broken glass, and other sharp items when found include:
 - Disposable gloves
 - Hand brush, broom, dust pan
 - Floor caution signs
 - Waste container, cardboard box (lined with plastic)(Clean up procedures as per Administrative Controls below)

- c. Waste management: Follow municipal guidelines for waste disposal. Assistance can be provided by the SSRSB Operations Department.

2. Administrative Controls:

- a. General precautions:

- All procedures involving blood or bodily fluids must be done in such a manner to minimize splashing, spraying, and splattering of these substances.
- No eating, drinking, smoking, personal care (make-up, teeth brushing, and handling contact lenses) in areas where exposure may occur. No storing food or drink in areas that may come in contact with blood or bodily fluids.

- b. General housekeeping and cleaning practices:

- Routine housekeeping and cleaning is sufficient in normal circumstances. Employees are to follow job training and product instructions for use. Further instruction shall be provided should situations occur that require alternating to other procedures and products.

- c. Blood and bodily fluid clean-up procedures (to be done only by employees trained to use SSRSB cleaning chemicals, including WHMIS):

- In the event of any spill of blood or bodily fluid, and prior to any clean-up, gloves must be worn.
- If there is no trained employee immediately available (for example the school Custodian or Janitor), alternative means of containment and prevention of exposure must be used. This may include using absorbent materials, cordoning off the area, posting caution signs.
- Inspect the area for distribution of the spill – splatters and splashes. Restrict and post caution signs in the area around the spill until it has been cleaned, disinfected and completely dry.
- If spill is dry, spray down using disinfectant to absorb any dried liquid. If spill is wet, confine and contain the spill with absorbent material – wipe up with disposable paper towel, use a scraper or scoop. Dispose of towels by placing in plastic bag and sealing.
- Disinfect the entire spill with disinfectant product. Allow to stand on pre-cleaned surface for 10 minutes. Wipe up the area again using disposable towel or mop.
- Remove gloves and wash hands. Remove any other personal protective equipment.

- Remove waste bag to waste disposal location, taking care to keep bags away from body, floor and furniture to prevent any ripping. Avoid rupturing bags by not compacting in disposal containers.
- d. Hand washing practices:
 - Thorough and frequent hand washing is essential.
 - All potentially exposed areas of skin must be washed with soap and water as soon as possible. This includes following the removal of gloves or any other personal protective equipment.
 - Employees should be familiar with the nearest hand washing facilities in the building.
 - Wash hands with soap and running water by lathering all hand surfaces for 10-15 seconds. Dry well and use paper towel to shut off taps.
- e. Disinfection practices for tools, equipment, and clothing:
 - Any tools, equipment, clothing that may have come in contact with blood or bodily fluid shall be examined. If there is any doubt, decontaminate tools and equipment before further use by disinfecting with an appropriate disinfectant ensuring sufficient contact time. Soiled education items, such as toys, puzzles, balls, are to be washed in a designated area and away from any food preparation areas.
 - Soiled student and employee clothing shall be sent home for laundering. For employees working in situations with an increased risk of exposure to blood and bodily fluid, a change of clothing shall be kept at work. If a change of clothing is not available, employees shall request permission to leave work to go home for a change of clothing. Any other items, such as lift pads, must be washed separately in hot soapy water and dried in a hot dryer and not in the same washer as other items such as dish clothes, towels, etc.

For the following: any injury determined to be life-threatening, seek first aid immediately and follow-up medical care as necessary.

- f. Procedure for handling needles and sharps:
 - Anyone who encounters a needle that has not been properly discarded shall notify a Supervisor/Principal immediately of its location.
 - Do not bend, break, or otherwise manipulate used needles by hand. Do not attempt to recap needles.
 - Removal of found needles shall only be done using a tool such as pliers, forceps, broom and dustpan and placed in a proper sharps container, or cardboard box for disposal.

- g. Procedure for unintentional needle stick wounds:
 - Apply pressure to encourage bleeding to flush the wound.
 - Wash wound with soap and water or disinfectant and rinse with water.
 - The incident is to be reported to the Supervisor/Principal with any available information on potential exposure. The Supervisor/Principal shall refer to Public Health (543-0850).
 - h. Procedure for unintended exposure to other potentially infectious materials:
 - Wash affected area well with plenty of soap and water.
 - Wash soiled cloths separately in hot soapy water and dry in a hot dryer, or have clothes dry-cleaned.
 - The incident is to be reported to the Supervisor with any available information on potential exposure.
3. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):
- a. Following the identification of risk by an employee, a risk assessment shall be performed by the Supervisor/Principals to determine risk and selection of PPE. Consultation with individuals with expertise in the area of occupational health and safety or hygiene may be required. The assessment shall evaluate the likelihood of exposure to blood or bodily fluids through various means of direct or indirect contacts (touching, spraying, aerosolizing, or splashing).
 - b. The consideration for PPE shall restrict blood or bodily fluids from passing through or reaching an employee's clothing, skin, or mouth under normal conditions for use. The duration of time for which the PPE will be used must also be considered. The Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee or Representative at the workplace shall advise the employer on the selection of PPE that is best adapted to the employees' needs, including any personal allergies to PPE products. The provision of any required PPE associated with student personal care will be provided through Student Services.
 - c. Once personal PPE has been identified as required, it must be worn in the circumstances of the risk of exposure.
 - Disposable gloves: shall be used for one single use, and one single individual, and it is recommended that nitrile gloves, (that meet or exceed ASTM D6319) be used. They are to be worn when touching blood, bodily fluid or any items that may have been in contact with these fluids. Gloves should also be worn when touching broken skin or mucous membrane. An employee shall contact their Supervisor/Principal immediately if they have a personal allergic condition to the gloves provided.

- Glove removal procedure:
 - Grasp the cuff of one glove
 - Pull the cuff towards the fingers turning the gloves inside out.
 - As the glove comes off, hold it in the palm of the other hand.
 - Slide your fingers under the cuff of the other glove. Pull the cuff towards the fingers over the first glove without touching the outside of either glove.
 - Isolation Gowns/Aprons – Disposable poly or single-use polypropylene products are useful in situations such as a regular occurrence of projectile fluids and a lack of appropriate laundry facilities.

Isolation Gowns/Aprons should be put on before gloves

 - Gown/Apron removal procedure:
 - Unfasten ties and peel gown/apron away from neck
 - For Gowns: slip fingers in one hand under wrist cuff and pull hand inside. With inside hand, push sleeve off with the other arm
 - Fold dirty side to dirty side and roll into a bundle (do not shake)
 - Discard and perform hand washing practices
 - Face Protection – protection for eyes, nose, and mouth and protect from the potential for splash, spray or spatter of blood or body fluids. There are different types and combinations of protection available, such as surgical-type masks with ear loops.
 - Mouth pieces: There shall be disposable mouth pieces for CPR available in each workplace first aid kit
- d. If any PPE becomes penetrated with blood or bodily fluid, remove as soon as possible. Place items in appropriate bag or container for decontamination or disposal. Wash hands and contaminated areas immediately and replace any personal protective equipment that has been torn, punctured or lose their protective function. Remove any PPE before leaving the workplace and wash hands following removal.

4. Additional Prevention

- a. Immunization: Staff is strongly encouraged to keep up-to-date on immunizations and to obtain immunizations through their medical provider. This is especially important for employees at increased risk of Hepatitis B (ie, working with a student who persistently bites). Employees will be made familiar with any risks that become identified through Program Planning and assistance for costs associated with immunization to be submitted to the Human Resources Department.
- b. Post-exposure evaluation and follow-up records indicating incidents of include details of the incident and follow up procedures and outcomes. This information is to be kept confidential and not to be disclosed without the written consent of the employee.
- c. Training for affected employees will be provided on specific procedures and may include any or all of the following:
 - i. Sharps disposal containers, tools, waste disposal
 - ii. General precautions, housekeeping and cleaning
 - iii. Blood and bodily fluid clean-up procedures, including WHMIS for handling disinfectant products
 - iv. Hand washing practices
 - v. Contaminated tools, equipment, clothing practices
 - vi. Handling needles, sharps and potentially infectious materials, including unintentional exposures
 - vii. PPE (ie, glove removal, apron removal, etc)