

DO YOU WORK AROUND BLOOD OR BODY FLUIDS?

Cal/OSHA's New Rules



Labor Occupational Health Program
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The OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens standard appears in Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 29, 1910.1030. In California, Cal/OSHA follows a similar standard—California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 8, 5193. This booklet describes the Cal/OSHA standard.

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What Is Cal/OSHA's New Rule?

People who work around blood and certain other body fluids can get serious diseases.

The federal and state governments have new rules to protect healthcare workers on the job. In California, the new **Bloodborne Pathogens** standard is enforced by Cal/OSHA.

What Diseases Can Be Spread by Blood?

- ▲ HIV/AIDS
- ▲ Hepatitis B
- ▲ Hepatitis C
- ▲ Malaria
- ▲ Syphilis



All these diseases (and others which are less common) are caused by **bloodborne pathogens**. These are organisms so small that you can't see them with your naked eye.

Do You Work Around Any of These Body Fluids?

- ▲ Blood
- ▲ Fluids surrounding joints, lungs, heart, abdomen
- ▲ Semen
- ▲ Fluids in childbirth
- ▲ Vaginal fluids
- ▲ Or any other body fluid that may contain blood.



If you said **yes**, then Cal/OSHA's new standard applies to you. It applies to most workers in nursing homes and home healthcare agencies.

What Is HIV/AIDS?

- ▲ **AIDS** is caused by a virus called **HIV** (**H**uman **I**mmunodeficiency **V**irus).
- ▲ HIV can be spread:
 - during sex with an infected person
 - sharing needles with someone who's infected
 - from an infected mother to her child before birth or during delivery
 - on the job, if you get infected blood or body fluids into your bloodstream.
- ▲ HIV is **not** spread by touching, feeding, or hugging a patient. It is **not** spread through the air, in food, or by insect bites.
- ▲ Anyone can get AIDS—men, women, both gay and straight people, drug users, and people who don't use drugs.
- ▲ HIV damages the **immune system**—your body's way of fighting off disease. Without a healthy immune system, you are more likely to get illnesses like pneumonia, infections, and cancer.
- ▲ So far, there is no cure for AIDS, and no vaccine.



What Is Hepatitis?

▲ **Hepatitis** is a liver disease. Two types—Hepatitis B and C—are a growing threat to healthcare workers.

▲ Hepatitis B is one of the most common diseases spread by blood. It is caused by the Hepatitis B Virus (HBV), and is transmitted the same way as HIV/AIDS.

— 6,800 healthcare workers are infected on the job each year by Hepatitis B.

— 250 healthcare workers are hospitalized with HBV each year.

— About 100 health care workers die of HBV each year.

▲ Hepatitis C is less common. It is also spread the same way as HIV/AIDS.

▲ There **is** a vaccine for Hepatitis B.

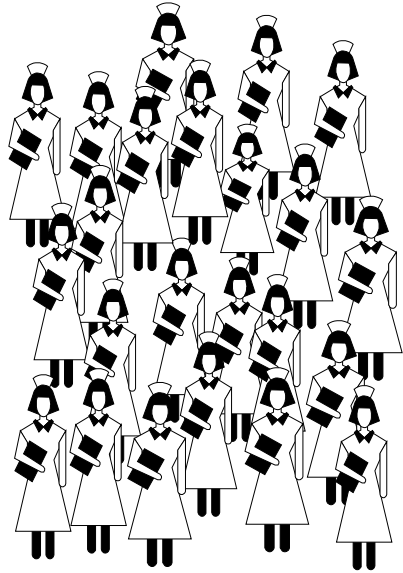
▲ There is **no** vaccine for Hepatitis C.



What Are Your Chances of Getting HIV/AIDS or Hepatitis B on the Job?



About 120 U.S. healthcare workers have been infected on the job by HIV since 1981. (Reported cases.)



About 6,800 U.S. healthcare workers are infected on the job by Hepatitis B every year. (Reported cases.)

- ▲ Your chances of getting HIV on the job are low. Needlesticks are the most common way that healthcare workers get infected.
- ▲ You are much more likely to get Hepatitis B than HIV/AIDS if you get infected blood into your bloodstream.
- ▲ It is not known at this time how many healthcare workers get infected with Hepatitis C on the job. About 150,000 people in the U.S. get Hepatitis C each year.

How Can You Prevent Hepatitis B?

- ▲ It can be prevented by getting a vaccine.
- ▲ The vaccine is given as a series of three shots in the arm.
- ▲ The vaccine is very effective.



Cal/OSHA says that your employer must:

- ▲ Pay for the Hepatitis B vaccine if you need it. You should get it if you might be exposed to blood or body fluids on the job.
- ▲ Make the vaccine available at a reasonable time, during working hours.



Know Your Rights

- If you refuse to get vaccinated, you must sign a special form. You can still get the vaccine later if you change your mind, and your employer must pay for it.

What Must Your Employer Do to Protect You?



Cal/OSHA says your employer must have a written **Exposure Control Plan**.

Your employer's plan should tell you:

- ▲ Which jobs may expose workers to blood or other body fluids.
- ▲ How your employer will protect you.
- ▲ What your employer will do if you get exposed.



Know Your Rights

- Your employer must review and update the Exposure Control Plan once a year.
- Your employer must give you a copy of the Exposure Control Plan if you ask for it.

How Can You Get Exposed to Blood or Body Fluids at Work?



▲ **Openings** in your skin—a cut, open sore, rash, or chapped area.

▲ **Punctures** in your skin from a used needle, razor, lancet, or broken glass.

▲ **Splashes** into your nose, eyes, or mouth.



How Can You Protect Yourself?

Use Universal Precautions

Cal/OSHA says that workers who may come in contact with blood or body fluids should use Universal Precautions. This means you **must** treat **all** blood and body fluids as if they are infected.

Your employer must provide free protective equipment if you need it.

Wear Gloves

- ▲ Use them every time you touch blood or body fluids.
- ▲ Make sure they fit.
- ▲ Replace them if they get torn or damaged.
- ▲ Use new gloves for each new patient and each new task.
- ▲ Use special gloves if you are allergic to latex or vinyl.
- ▲ Never re-use disposable gloves.



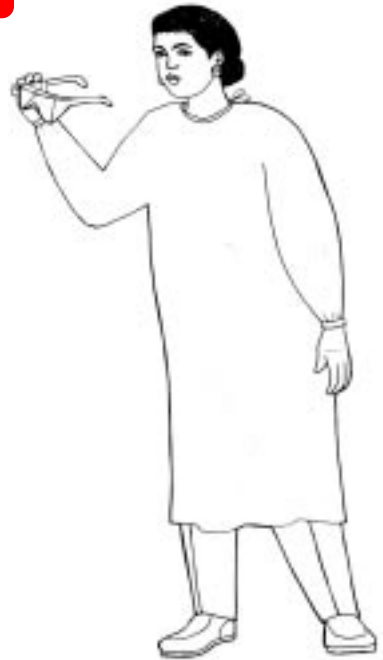
Wash Your Hands



- ▲ Before and after your shift.
- ▲ Before you eat.
- ▲ After you use the bathroom.
- ▲ After you touch blood or body fluids.
- ▲ After you take off your gloves.
- ▲ Use soap and water. If there are no sinks with running water, use antiseptic hand cleaner or a towelette.

Wear Protective Clothing

- ▲ Wear a gown or apron if you could get splashed.
- ▲ Use a mask, face shield, or goggles if you could get splashed in the face.



Use a Sharps Container



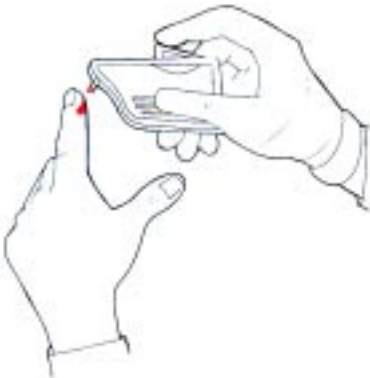
- ▲ Place needles, razors, and lancets in an approved sharps container.
- ▲ Make sure your sharps container isn't too full.
- ▲ The sharps container must:
 - be sturdy
 - not leak
 - have a biohazard label.
- ▲ Never recap needles.

What Is a Biohazard Label?

- ▲ It is a special symbol that must be on containers that carry bloody items.
- ▲ The word **BIOHAZARD** should be below the symbol.
- ▲ Sharps containers must have a biohazard label.
- ▲ Trash bags with bloody materials must be red and have a biohazard label.



What About Using Safer Equipment?



Safer equipment can remove hazards on the job. The Cal/OSHA standard says that one way your employer can protect you is to supply such equipment.

Example: This disposable lancet is used one time—then you throw it away. Your hand doesn't come in contact with the tip at any time.

What Happens If You Do Get Exposed to Blood or Body Fluids?

If you get exposed you should:

- ▲ Wash your skin with soap and water right away.
- ▲ Flush your eyes, nose, and mouth with water if your face was splashed.
- ▲ Report the incident to your supervisor, doctor, and union rep.

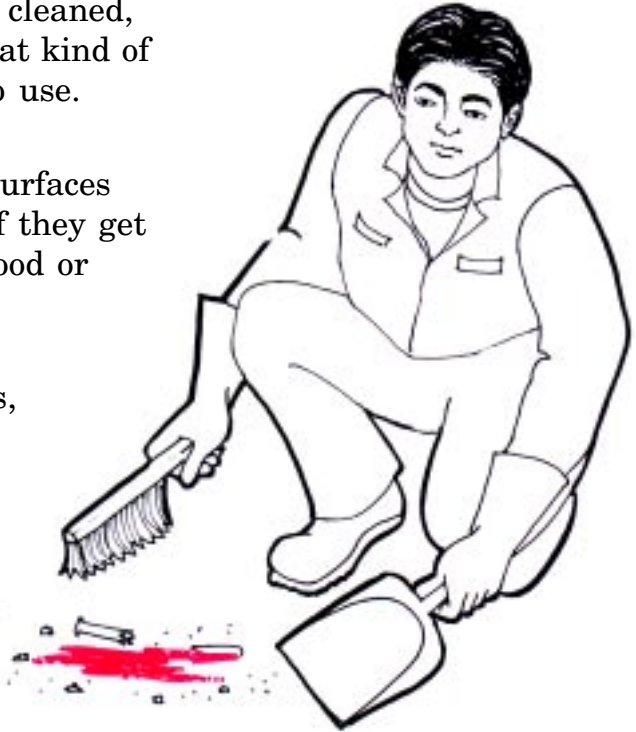


Your employer should send you for a free medical check-up. The medical staff will:

1. Record how you got exposed.
2. Test the blood you were exposed to.
3. Test your blood (with your consent).
4. Give you counseling.
5. Provide medical treatment as needed, including future treatment.
6. Keep all information about the incident confidential. (These records should be separate from your personnel records.)

What If You Work in Housekeeping?

- ▲ Your employer must have a written cleaning schedule. It should say what must be cleaned, when, and what kind of disinfectant to use.
- ▲ Disinfect all surfaces immediately if they get soiled with blood or body fluids.
- ▲ Disinfect pails, buckets, and bins on a regular basis.
- ▲ Use a broom or tool to pick up broken glass with blood on it. Never use your bare hands. Put the broken glass in a sharps container.
- ▲ Wear utility gloves when cleaning. You can reuse them, but replace them if they get cracked, torn, or damaged.



How Should You Handle Soiled Laundry?

- ▲ Handle soiled laundry as little as possible.
- ▲ Wear gloves when you handle laundry soiled with blood or body fluids. Use other protective equipment if you need it.
- ▲ Unless *all* laundry is treated as infectious, use a special bag to carry bloody laundry. The bag should not leak. It should have a biohazard label or special color so people can tell it's different from other laundry.
- ▲ Wear a gown when you handle wet or soiled linens. It should prevent liquid from soaking through to your clothes.



What Training Do Workers Need?

Cal/OSHA says that your employer must give you training once a year if you work near blood or body fluids.

Training should include:

- ▲ Bloodborne diseases (HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis B, etc.)
- ▲ Information on your employer's Exposure Control Plan
- ▲ How to protect yourself on the job
- ▲ How and when to use protective equipment
- ▲ What to do if you get exposed to blood or body fluids
- ▲ Information on the Hepatitis B vaccine
- ▲ Information in your own language if you don't speak English
- ▲ Specific information about your own workplace.



Checklist on the Cal/OSHA Standard

	Yes	No
1. Have you seen your employer's Exposure Control Plan?	_____	_____
2. Are Universal Precautions always followed?	_____	_____
3. Does your employer supply gloves, gowns, and eye protection?	_____	_____
4. Are sharps containers labeled, easy to find, and not too full?	_____	_____
5. Is the Hepatitis B vaccine offered free to workers who may be exposed to blood?	_____	_____
6. Have you been trained about HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis B and C?	_____	_____
7. Have you been trained about the information in this booklet?	_____	_____
8. Do you know what to do if you get exposed to blood or body fluids?	_____	_____
9. Does your employer provide sinks or other hand washing facilities?	_____	_____

Talk to your co-workers, union representative, and employer about any problems you discovered when you filled out the Checklist.