



## PS Safety & Risk Management, LLC

*Providing Safety Solutions for Today's Needs*

226 Ship Drive #2  
Baton Rouge, LA 70806  
(225)716-0029 Fax: (225)636-5666  
[www.pssafety.net](http://www.pssafety.net)

### What are bloodborne pathogens?

Bloodborne pathogens are infectious materials in blood that can cause disease in humans, including hepatitis B and C and human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV. Workers exposed to these pathogens risk serious illness or death.

### What protections does OSHA's Bloodborne Pathogen standard provide?

The full text of OSHA's Bloodborne Pathogens Standard requires employers to do the following:

- **Establish an exposure control plan.** This is a written plan to eliminate or minimize employee exposures. Employers must update the plan annually to reflect technological changes that will help eliminate or reduce exposure to bloodborne pathogens. In the plan, employers must document annually that they have considered and implemented safer medical devices, if feasible, and that they have solicited input from frontline workers in identifying, evaluating, and selecting engineering controls.
- **Use engineering controls.** These are devices that isolate or remove the bloodborne pathogen hazard from the workplace. They include sharps disposal containers, self-sheathing needles, and safer medical devices such as sharps with engineered sharps-injury protection and needleless systems.
- **Enforce work practice controls.** These are practices that reduce the likelihood of exposure by changing the way a task is performed. They include appropriate procedures for hand washing, sharps disposing, lab specimen packaging, laundry handling, and contaminated material cleaning.
- **Provide personal protective equipment** such as gloves, gowns, and masks. Employers must clean, repair, and replace this equipment as needed.
- **Make available Hepatitis B vaccinations** to all employees with occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens within 10 days of assignment.
- **Provide post-exposure follow up** to any worker who experiences an exposure incident, at no cost to the worker. This includes conducting laboratory tests; providing confidential medical evaluation, identifying, and testing the source individual, if feasible; testing the exposed employee's blood, if the worker consents; performing post-exposure prophylaxis; offering counseling; and evaluating reported illnesses. All diagnoses must remain confidential.
- **Use labels and signs to communicate hazards.** The standard requires warning labels affixed to containers of regulated waste, refrigerators and freezers, and other containers used to store or transplant blood or other potentially

infectious materials. Facilities may use red bags or containers instead of labels. Employers also must post signs to identify restricted areas.

■ **Provide information and training to employees.** Employers must ensure that their workers receive regular training that covers the dangers of bloodborne pathogens, preventive practices, and post-exposure procedures. Employers must offer this training on initial assignment, then at least annually. In addition, laboratory and production facility workers must receive specialized initial training.

■ **Maintain employee medical and training records.** The employer also must maintain a Sharps Injury Log unless classified as an exempt industry under OSHA's standard on Recording and Reporting Occupational Injuries and Illnesses.

### **Needlestick/Sharps Injuries:**

#### **Handling Needles/Sharps:**

Do not bend, recap, or remove contaminated needles and other sharps unless such an act is required by a specific procedure or has no feasible alternative [[29 CFR 1910.1030\(d\)\(2\)\(vii\)](#)].

Do not shear or break contaminated sharps. (OSHA defines *contaminated* as the presence or the reasonably anticipated presence of blood or other potentially infectious materials on an item or surface) [[29 CFR 1910.1030\(d\)\(2\)\(vii\)](#)].

#### **Containerization:**

Have needle containers available near areas where needles may be found. [[29 CFR 1910.1030\(d\)\(4\)\(iii\)\(A\)\(2\)](#)].

Discard contaminated sharps immediately [[29 CFR 1910.1030\(d\)\(4\)\(iii\)\(A\)\(1\)](#)] or as soon as feasible into appropriate containers.

- Sharps containers [[29 CFR 1910.1030\(d\)\(4\)\(iii\)\(A\)\(1\)](#)], must be:
- Closable, puncture-resistant, and leak-proof on sides and bottom.
- Accessible, maintained upright, and not allowed to overfill.
- Labeled or color coded according to [29 CFR 1910.1030\(g\)\(1\)\(i\)](#)
- Colored red or labeled with the [biohazard symbol](#).
- Labeled in fluorescent orange or orange-red, with lettering and symbols in a contrasting color [[29 CFR 1910.1030\(g\)\(1\)\(i\)\(C\)](#)]. Red bags or containers may be substituted for labels [[29 CFR 1910.1030\(g\)\(1\)\(i\)\(E\)](#)].

### **IF An Injury Occurs:**

The ([National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health \(NIOSH\)](#)) recommends that if an employee experiences a needlestick/sharps injury or is exposed to blood or other body fluids during the course of work that the following steps be taken immediately:

- Wash needlestick and cuts with soap and water.
- Flush splashes to the nose, mouth or skin with water.
- Irrigate eyes with clean water, saline or sterile irrigates.
- Report the incident to your supervisor
- Seek medical treatment immediately.

The information in this Safety Meeting Topic was provided by OSHA.

For more information or training needs, contact **PS Safety & Risk Management, Inc.** at (225) 716-0029 or visit us at [www.pssafety.net](http://www.pssafety.net)