

BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS

#330

1.0 PURPOSE. To establish policies and procedures relating to bloodborne pathogens in order to reduce health risks associated with HIV, Hepatitis B, and any other bloodborne pathogen for infected and uninfected employees.

2.0 DEFINITIONS.

"Active". A person who harbors a specific pathogenic organism; is ill or displays signs or symptoms of the disease caused by the organism.

"Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)". A severe manifestation of infection with human immunodeficiency virus that can progressively destroy the immune system rendering it incapable of fighting off many common viruses, bacteria and other human pathogens.

"Antibody". A protein in the blood produced in response to exposure to specific foreign antigens.

"Bloodborne Pathogen". A potentially harmful virus or bacteria that can be transmitted through a significant exposure to another person's blood or infectious body fluids.

"Carrier". A person who harbors a specific pathogenic organism in the absence of discernible signs or symptoms of the disease and who is potentially capable of spreading the organism to others.

"Health Care Worker (HCW)". An employee working in a field providing health care to others.

"Hepatitis B (Hep B)". Disease caused by a highly infectious virus that attacks the liver. The virus can lead to severe illness, liver damage, and in some cases, death. The infected person can be contagious for several weeks before symptoms appear and as long as the person is ill. A person can convert to a chronic carrier state. Carriers may have either persistent or active disease and can infect others indefinitely.

"Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)". The virus that usually leads to AIDS several years after initial infection.

"HIV Infection." The presence of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) as detected by the presence of antibodies to HIV. These antibodies usually take three to six months after infection to show up on a blood test.

"Invasive Procedure". A medical procedure which results in contact with mucous membranes or a break in the integrity of the skin.

"Retrovirus." A class of viruses that includes the human immunodeficiency virus.

"Universal Precautions". Universal precautions is the practice of treating all human blood and body fluids as if they are known to be infectious.

3.0 DISCRIMINATION PROHIBITED. Employees known to be infected with a bloodborne pathogen shall not be discriminated against or restricted from work solely based on this finding. Infected employees shall be treated as if they were affected with any other disease. Administrative Officers shall consider making reasonable accommodation for adjustments to work duties.

4.0 Any employee who is tested positive for a bloodborne pathogen may make it known to their Administrative Officer if they would like consideration or accommodation pertaining to their work duties. The Administrative Officer shall immediately notify the Personnel Director. No action may be taken with respect to an employee disclosing infection except as provided herein or pursuant to Davis County Personnel Policies and Procedures and the Davis County Merit System Ordinance.

5.0 All HCWs must adhere to universal precautions, including the appropriate use of hand washing, protective barriers, and care in the use and disposal of needles and other sharp instruments. HCWs who have exudative lesions or weeping dermatitis shall refrain, until the condition resolves, from all direct patient care and from handling patient care equipment and devices used in performing invasive procedures. HCWs must also comply with current guidelines for disinfection and sterilization of reusable devices used in invasive procedures. All HCWs shall comply with OSHA guidelines to limit their occupational exposure to blood and other potentially infectious materials. These guidelines cover all employees who may, as the result of performing their job duties, come in contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials.

6.0 Upon notification that an employee is infected with a bloodborne pathogen, the Personnel Director shall consult with the Director of Health and establish a "Review Group". The Review Group should consist of the Director of Health, selected employees of the Utah State and Davis County Health Departments working in HIV/Aids testing and counseling, the Commissioner sitting on the Board of Health, the Personnel Director, the employee's physician (if requested by employee), and the employee's Administrative Officer.

6.1 The Review Group shall review all pertinent information and establish written findings of fact and recommendations based on reasonable medical judgments and other information concerning the following:

- A. The nature of the risk of transmission relevant to work activities.
- B. The probability of the risk, particularly the reasonable likelihood that the bloodborne pathogen could be transmitted to other persons by the infected employee relevant to work activities.
- C. The nature and the probability of any health related risks to the infected employee.
- D. The Administrative Officer shall implement decisions of the Review Group.

7.0 EMPLOYEE RIGHTS. Any employee who disagrees with the decisions of the Review Group may meet with the Review Group and present reasons why the decisions should be changed. Merit covered employees who disagree with the decisions of the Review Group may appeal the decision to the Career Service Council as outlined in the Merit System Ordinance. .

8.0 INFECTION PREVENTION. Each County department shall implement infection control procedures as dictated by the scope of the work performed. Guidelines regarding the prevention and transmission of bloodborne pathogens in the workplace are available from the Davis County Health Department.

9.0 CONFIDENTIALITY. Information related to the employee's illness shall be held in strict confidence with access limited to members of the Review Group. Release of medical information to parties other than the State Health Department shall require a written release from the employee. Any person, other than the infected individual, releasing confidential information regarding infected employees shall be disciplined in accordance with Personnel Policies and Procedures.

10.0 Employees who refuse to work with infected employees may be disciplined in accordance with Personnel Policies and Procedures.