



Bloodborne Pathogens

Toolbox Talks are intended to provide the supervisor with information to facilitate discussion with the workgroup about workplace safety issues and topics.



Arthur J. Gallagher & Co.

TOPIC: Bloodborne Pathogens

You don't have to be a health care professional to see blood in the workplace; any employee may occasionally be exposed to it. But for most of us, it is rare to see blood at work – one example might be when a co-worker is injured on the job. At times like these, you need to know what you should do to protect yourself from the risk of infection from bloodborne pathogens.

There are three bloodborne pathogens that you need to know about:

- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)
- Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) and
- Hepatitis C Virus (HCV)

All three viruses spread from one person to another by contact with infected blood but these viruses are not in saliva, sweat, tears, urine or vomit unless blood can be seen in them. And all three are capable of causing serious illness; in some cases, exposure today can lead to death years later.

How Can We Protect Ourselves?

The simple answer is to not come into contact with blood. If you see blood, stay away. There are times that we won't be able to do that. If a co-worker is seriously injured, most of us would rush to help. Staying away may not be something you can do.

If staying away from blood is not reasonable, how can we protect ourselves from becoming infected with a bloodborne pathogen?

We use a process called Universal Precautions or Standard Precautions. That simply means that we treat all human blood and other body fluids as if they are infectious and isolate ourselves from it through protective barriers. Universal precautions include good hygiene, handwashing, gloves, other protective barriers, and proper disposal of blood, hypodermic needles and blood tainted materials.

Supervisor _____

Date _____

Employee Participants:

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