

## **MAJOR PROGRAM POINTS**

# **"BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS... A REFRESHER PROGRAM"**

**Training for  
THE OSHA BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS STANDARD**

**Quality Safety and Health Products, for Today... and Tomorrow**

## OUTLINE OF MAJOR PROGRAM POINTS

The following outline summarizes the major points of information presented in the videotape program. The outline can be used to review the program before conducting a classroom session, as well as in preparing to lead a class discussion about the program.

- **You already know that direct contact with blood or other body substances can put you in jeopardy!**
  - But you may have become so comfortable with your job that you have forgotten how dangerous some of the things you encounter can be.
  - Taking another look at OSHA's "Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens Standard" may make you see your work a little differently.
  
- **The regulation is designed to help protect workers from on-the-job exposure to blood and other body substances. These materials can carry dangerous "stowaways", such as:**
  - Hepatitis B.
  - Hepatitis C.
  - HIV (which is responsible for AIDS).
  
- **The regulation also reminds us of how many places we can encounter bloodborne pathogens.**
  - It spells out the requirements for a facility-wide Exposure Control Plan.
  
- **The Exposure Control Plan sets up thorough procedures to ensure the safety of everyone on the job.**
  
- **One of the most important aspects of the plan is the use of "Standard Precautions".**
  - This treats all human blood and other body substances as if they are known to be infected.

- **While many types of disease-causing microorganisms can be found in human blood, the greatest threats are from:**
  - Hepatitis B.
  - Hepatitis C.
  - HIV.
  
- **Taking steps to control the spread of HIV is particularly important, since there is currently no vaccine or cure for this virus.**
  
- **The first symptoms of HIV infection are often mild.**
  - They frequently resemble those of the flu.
  - However, many people fail to show any symptoms at all for a decade or more.
  
- **It is generally believed, however, that those who contract HIV will eventually develop Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS).**
  - AIDS strips away the body's ability to fight off disease, literally breaking down the immune system.
  
- **Hepatitis B and C are diseases that attack the liver.**
  - There are thousands of new cases of these viruses reported in the U.S. each year.
  
- **Initial symptoms of hepatitis are also flu-like.**
  - In addition, jaundice... a yellowing of the skin... will eventually appear.
  - A darkening of the urine may also occur.
  - However, as with HIV, many victims fail to show symptoms for some time.
  
- **Hepatitis B... and to a greater degree Hepatitis C... can frequently lead to more serious problems, such as:**
  - Cirrhosis.
  - Cancer.
  
- **There is no cure for Hepatitis B or C.**
  - However there is a vaccine that can prevent infection from Hepatitis B.

- **It is important that you take advantage of your facility's free vaccination program if your employer feels that you are "at risk" of exposure to Hepatitis B.**
  - Unfortunately, there is currently no vaccine for Hepatitis C.
  
- **Bloodborne pathogens are most often transmitted "parenterally".**
  - This is when microorganisms present in a substance are accidentally "injected" into a worker by a contaminated sharp object.
  
- **Transmission can also occur through:**
  - Breaks in the skin.
  - Contact with mucous membranes (such those found in the eyes, nose and mouth).
  
- **In addition to blood itself, you should be cautious of materials such as:**
  - Body substances with blood in them.
  - Human tissue.
  
- **Preventing exposures to all of these materials is a major aim of the OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standard.**
  - The regulation covers "all activities where there is a reasonable chance for exposure".
  - Your employer has compiled a complete list of these jobs in your facility's Exposure Control Plan.
  
- **For instance, cleaning crews routinely empty trash, clean counters and scrub floors.**
  - Any of these tasks may bring them into contact with discarded blood-soaked bandages, or other bloody materials.
  
- **Housekeeping staff may also find blood and body substances while:**
  - Changing bed linens.
  - Cleaning operating rooms and examination tables in hospitals and clinics.

- **Others who may find themselves in exposure situations include:**
  - Workers who receive soiled laundry for processing and cleaning.
  - Employees resupplying first aid kits who may occasionally encounter residues from injuries involving blood.
  - Staff members of company health clinics, medical offices and hospitals.
  
- **Workers involved in emergency first aid, law enforcement or fire brigades often find exposure to blood difficult to avoid.**
  - They frequently have to deal with accident victims.
  
- **These are just a few of the jobs performed every day that put people at risk of exposure to bloodborne pathogens.**
  - If you fit into a job category where there is a possibility of exposure, you need to keep your guard up at all times.
  
- **An Exposure Control Plan is a comprehensive document tailored to fit the special needs of an individual facility.**
  - Your facility's plan contains information that is important to your protection.
  - Become familiar with the plan yourself.
  - To see a copy, talk to your supervisor or safety officer.
  
- **Labeling is the most "visible" requirement in the plan.**
  - "Biohazard" labels are a dead giveaway that danger may be just around the corner.
  - When you see a biohazard label, be extra careful.
  
- **Items or surfaces bearing this symbol are suspected of being biologically "contaminated".**
  - This means there is a good chance that blood, or body substances are present... even if you don't see them.

- **You should attach biohazard labels to any materials or equipment that you think have been contaminated, such as:**
  - Industrial machines with blood on them.
  - Leaking blood sample carriers.
  - Stretchers used for an emergency rescue.
  
- **Remember, there doesn't have to be proof that something is contaminated, only the probability.**
  
- **Red biohazard bags or containers... such as those used to dispose of "regulated hazardous waste"... do not always carry the biohazard symbol.**
  - The red color alone is considered to be warning enough.
  
- **Types of regulated waste include potentially infectious materials, such as:**
  - Needles.
  - Broken glass.
  - Used specimen containers.
  - Blood-soaked bandages, bloody table coverings and towels.
  - Contaminated personal protective equipment.
  
- **Be sure to use biohazard bags, containers and labels wherever necessary.**
  - Ask your supervisor if you have any questions.
  
- **In addition to labeling, the Exposure Control Plan also sets up a system of controls to reduce exposure to bloodborne pathogens.**
  - The first step includes the use of Standard Precautions, which means treating all blood and body substances as if they are infectious.
  
- **"Engineering controls" will be called for as well. This involves equipment or machinery that can minimize exposure to infectious materials.**
  - For instance, tools as simple as a dustpan and broom, or tongs, can keep you from getting cut by contaminated broken glass.

- **The plan will also require you to put on personal protective equipment (PPE) whenever there is the possibility of exposure.**
  - This often means wearing eye protection, gloves, or even an apron or fluid-resistant cover gown.
  - You should wear whatever is required to keep a layer of protection between you and potential Bloodborne hazards.
  
- **If you work in a laboratory or healthcare facility, choose lab coats and aprons by the type of exposure you face.**
  - Splashing fluids and other materials must not soak through to your street clothes or skin.
  
- **It is also important to wear a mask and eye protection wherever there are splashing hazards.**
  - Don't let your guard down.
  
- **Deciding when to replace your PPE is important as well.**
  - If your gloves get contaminated, take them off and immediately wash your hands.
  - Throw disposable gloves away.
  - Reusable gloves should be recycled for decontamination.
  - Clean gloves should be put on between any activities that may involve exposure to bloodborne pathogens.
  - If you are "latex sensitive" ask your supervisor about the availability of latex-free PPE.
  
- **Another part of the Exposure Control Plan focuses on "work practice controls".**
  - These are the safest methods of doing things that may involve potential exposure to bloodborne pathogens.

- **The most important practice is to wash your hands whenever you have contact with body substances which may contain infectious microorganisms.**
  - You should also wash up after taking off gloves and other PPE.
  - Turn the water off with a paper towel, so you don't recontaminate yourself by accident.
  - Then clean off the spigot handles so you don't contaminate others!
- **You must wash your hands immediately if you are splashed with blood or other potentially infectious material.**
  - Rinse your eyes, nose or mouth with generous amounts of water if they have been exposed.
- **"Housekeeping Controls" are another important way of limiting exposure that the Exposure Control Plan discusses.**
  - Your facility's disinfection methods should be followed to the letter.
  - Written cleaning schedules must be kept to make sure that things are properly cleaned and decontaminated.
- **If you contaminate a work surface or piece of equipment, you should disinfect it immediately.**
  - Otherwise, perform normal decontamination procedures at the end of your shift.
- **When potentially contaminated equipment needs to be sent out for service, it should be examined and disinfected before shipment.**
  - If disinfecting is not possible, a biohazard label must be applied to the equipment.
- **Contaminated linens must be carefully placed in labeled or color-coded leak-proof containers.**
  - Laundry must be handled with gloves and other appropriate PPE.

- **Be especially careful when disposing of regulated waste.**
  - The containers must be leak-proof and appropriately labeled.
  - A secondary container may also be necessary.
  - If you are not sure, see your supervisor.
  
- **Remember that unsafe behaviors can transmit bloodborne pathogens as well.**
  - Do not eat, drink or store food in work areas where biohazards may be present.
  - Never smoke, or put on make-up, lip balm, or contact lenses in these areas either.
  
- **If something goes wrong, and you come into contact with a potentially infectious material... no matter how slight the exposure... you must act quickly.**
  
- **Your Exposure Control Plan will generally tell you to take the following steps:**
  - First take care of yourself.
  - Wash the area of your body that may have been exposed with soap and water.
  - Then, contain any spill and disinfect the area according to your facility's standard operating procedures.
  - When you are done, properly dispose of contaminated cleanup materials.
  
- **Afterwards, you should immediately notify:**
  - Your supervisor.
  - The Safety Department.
  - Your Occupational Health Office.
  
- **They will ask you to fill out a report describing exactly what happened during the exposure.**
  
- **An investigation will be conducted regarding:**
  - The blood or body substance that you were exposed to.
  - The health of the person it came from.

- **You will also be examined by a healthcare professional, who may ask you to have a blood test.**
  - If you have been exposed to Hepatitis B and haven't been vaccinated, an accelerated vaccination series may be called for.
  - The results of your examination will remain confidential.
- **OSHA's Bloodborne Pathogens Standard has created an increased awareness in all of us.**
- **We've seen the potential dangers, and heard reports about careless accidents that have exposed other workers.**
- **But most importantly, we've learned that by combining safe work practices, engineering controls and personal protective equipment, we can protect ourselves from bloodborne diseases!**