



ALABAMA MUNICIPAL INSURANCE CORPORATION MUNICIPAL WORKERS COMPENSATION FUND, INC.



Loss Control Division

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 Pathogens Standard Provide?

The full text of OSHA's Bloodborne Pathogens standards, published in *Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations 1910.1030*, details what employers must do to protect workers whose jobs put them at a reasonable risk of coming into contact with blood and other potentially infectious materials. The 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 needless 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 included 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 employers also must maintain a Sharps Injury Log unless classified as an exempt industry under OSHA's standard on Recording and Reporting Occupational Injuries and Illness.

How Can I Get More Information?

OSHA's website provides more in-depth information about blood pathogens on the Bloodborne Pathogens webpage at www.osha.gov/SLTC/bloodbornepathogens.

NOTE: This document is not intended to be legal advice. It does not identify all the issues surrounding the particular topic. Public agencies are encouraged to review their procedures with an expert or an attorney who is knowledgeable about the topic. Reliance on this information is at the sole risk of the user.