

## 20. Bloodborne Pathogens

### Overview

This section discusses the following topics:

- Bloodborne Pathogens

### References

OSHA Standard 29 CFR 1926  
OSHA Standard 29 CFR 1910.1030  
The St. Paul

CDC Hotline: 1-800-311-3435  
Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222

Bloodborne pathogens means pathogenic microorganisms that are present in human blood and can cause disease in humans. These pathogens include, but are not limited to, hepatitis B virus (HBV) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). These diseases are found in any type of body fluid, such as blood, saliva and any unfixed tissue or organ.

The OSHA standard on bloodborne pathogens covers all employees who are reasonably expected to come in contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials in performing their job. This is called occupational exposure. Employees at FairPoint Communications, Inc. do not possess an occupational exposure. A "Good Samaritan Act" such as assisting a co-worker with a nosebleed is not considered an occupational exposure. Even though FairPoint Communications, Inc. is currently exempt from the federal Bloodborne Pathogens Standard, we strive to provide a work place that is free from such known hazards.

Although employees at FairPoint Communications, Inc. are not at an occupational exposure risk, everyone has the potential to come across bloodborne pathogens. Under circumstances in which differentiation between body fluid types is difficult or impossible, all body fluids shall be considered

potentially infectious materials. This is known as the Universal Precaution. Since exposure to these materials may result in the transmission of a bloodborne pathogen, which may lead to disease or death, always treat unknown fluids as potential danger. Also by using Engineering Controls like disposal containers and resuscitation devices that isolate the bloodborne pathogen will remove the hazards from the workplace.

Most likely contact for FairPoint Communications employees is when our employees do “Good Samaritan Acts.” Make sure you follow all safety guidelines set forth in the Health and Safety Manual. Always wear gloves and other PPE when dealing with injured persons. Keep yourself safe by:

- Following the Universal Precaution rule and utilizing Engineering Controls.
- Give help without exposing or endangering yourself. Avoid mouth to mouth if at all possible.
- Eating, drinking, smoking, applying cosmetics or lip balm, and handling contact lenses are prohibited in work areas where there is a reasonable likelihood of a potential exposure.
- If blood or other potentially infectious materials penetrate a garment, the garment shall be removed immediately or as soon as feasible. Handle contaminated laundry as little as possible with a minimum of agitation. Always hold contaminated laundry at the top of the bag and away from your body at arms length.
- Always wash hands and any other skin with soap and water, or flush mucous membranes with water immediately or as soon as feasible following contact of such body areas with blood or other potentially infectious materials. If you are unable to wash hands with soap and water, the use of antiseptic cleaners along with disposable cloths, paper towels, or antiseptic towelettes are acceptable. But, you should wash with warm water and soap ASAP.
- Always wash your hands after the removal of gloves or other PPE.

First aid responders who are designated by the employer to provide first aid assistance when needed, but who’s primary job responsibility is not rendering first aid, are exempt from the requirement to be offered the pre-exposure hepatitis B vaccination. Although, if any employee goes beyond their job requirement and comes into contact with any potential bloodborne pathogen, that employee is entitled to **FREE** hepatitis B vaccination. The vaccine will be provided within 24 hours to any employee after potential exposure.

Decontamination means the use of physical or chemical means to remove, inactivate, or destroy bloodborne pathogens on a surface or item to the point where it is no longer capable of transmitting infectious particles and the surface or item is rendered safe for handling, use, or disposal.

If an employee finds any substance that is questionable and needs to be decontaminated, use an Antimicrobial chemical. If you are unsure which chemical to use, or if what you have is appropriate, you can contact the EPA website to see which disinfectant to use in the cleanup. Bleach is normally appropriate for most cleanups for decontamination. They can be reached at 703-308-0127, or visit their website at [www.epa.gov/oppad001/chemregindex.htm](http://www.epa.gov/oppad001/chemregindex.htm).

It is important to note that HBV can live up to 1 week outside the body on environment surfaces. It has been said that 1 cubic centimeter of infected blood could contain as many as 100,000,000 particles of HBV. This makes HBV highly contagious. Scientists and medical authorities agree that HIV does not survive well in the environment, making the possibility of environmental transmission remote. Drying of infected human blood or other body fluids reduces the theoretical risk of environmental transmission to that which has been observed--essentially zero.

### **Bloodborne Pathogen Safety Procedures**

- Employees should recognize that Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Hepatitis B Virus (HBV), and other pathogens may be present in blood, body fluids and in unfixed tissues or organs.
- Body fluids of concern are blood, semen, vaginal secretions, cerebrospinal fluid, synovial fluid, pleural fluid, saliva from dental procedures, any body fluid with visible blood, and any unidentifiable body fluid. Feces and vomit should also be considered potentially infectious, since they may contain blood which is not easily visible.
- Body fluids which are generally NOT considered potentially infectious include nasal secretions, sputum, sweat, tears, and urine.
- Pathogens can enter the body through cuts, nicks, skin abrasions, and the mucous membranes of the mouth, eyes, or nose.
- All blood or other body fluids of concern, as described above, should be assumed to be infectious. Universal Precautions should be followed when working with these potentially infectious materials.
- Universal Precautions to be followed include:

Wear impervious gloves. Latex, neoprene, or other impervious materials are acceptable. Leather gloves do NOT offer protection from infectious agents. Wash gloves with soap and water or disinfectant before removing.

Use disinfectants (bleach or quaternary ammonium) on small spills before handling. Wash hands immediately after removing gloves. Use soap and water or disinfectant towellettes.

Wear an impervious apron or suit if the possibility exists of splashing infectious materials onto exposed skin.

Wear eye protection if the possibility exists of splashing infectious materials into your eyes.

Wear a face mask if the possibility exists of splashing infectious materials onto your face.

Report all possible exposure incidents to your supervisor immediately. Employees who have had exposure to potentially infectious materials may have a confidential consultation with a physician.

Employees who may be exposed to potentially infectious materials can receive a hepatitis B vaccination.