

SAFETY ORIENTATION

For Your Own Good

Introduction

No matter where you work in the healthcare field, you come across unique and possibly fatal hazards everyday. This handbook will show you how to protect yourself from some of the most common hazards.

Slips, Trips & Falls

You can reduce your risk of injury from slips, trips and falls if you are aware of your surroundings. Sources of slip, trip and fall hazards include:

- Wet floors
- Untacked carpets
- Cords
- Poor lighting or too much lighting.

If you observe a hazard, correct it or report it to your supervisor. In addition:

- Don't rush down corridors. Take shorter, slower steps. Maintain your center of balance.
- Wear sensible shoes with good traction and support.

Back Safety

Some healthcare workers have as much strain on their backs as construction workers. To avoid back injury, stay physically fit and maintain good posture.

When lifting patients or heavy items:

- Bend your hips and knees — not your waist.
- Lift with your leg muscles — not your back or arm muscles.
- Avoid twisting.
- Never lift a load higher than your waist.
- Keep the load close to your body.
- If you need help lifting or moving a load, ask for it.

Electrical Safety

To manage electricity safely:

- Report all shocks immediately — even tingles.
- Never work around electricity when you or your surroundings are wet. Remove metal jewelry, watches and belt buckles.

- Don't use so-called "octopus" adapters. Plugging too many cords into one outlet can overload the circuit.
- Check GFCI outlets regularly. Push the test button. The reset button should pop out. Press the reset button to reactivate.
- Examine all cords and plugs routinely. Replace any that are damaged or that heat up when used.
- Keep cords away from heat and water. Don't run cords under rugs or through doorways.
- Never attach cords to the floor, wall or other objects with tacks or pins.
- Use grounded, three-hole outlets. Never break off or bend the third prong on a grounded plug.
- Don't use damaged outlets or adapters that let you plug extra cords into an outlet.
- Don't use any electrical device that blows a fuse, trips a circuit breaker, shocks or appears damaged.
- Follow safety instructions when using electrical equipment.

Fire Safety

Prepare yourself before fire strikes in your workplace:

- Memorize all exit and emergency routes.
- Identify all fire alarms.
- Learn how to operate fire extinguishers.
- The first 2-3 minutes are most critical. It is a RACE for safety.

Remember, smoke and heat are just as deadly as flames:

- Don't touch or open any door without first testing the amount of heat radiating from it with the back of your hand.
- Stay low to the floor to avoid inhaling too much smoke.

Disinfection and Sterilization

Develop a mental eye for spotting potential hazards that cannot be seen, heard, felt or smelled:

- Recognize what needs to be disinfected and sterilized and learn appropriate methods for each.
- Generally, semi-critical equipment can be disinfected. Critical equipment requires the more effective sterilization.

Handling Medical Waste

Blood and other body fluids can carry the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the hepatitis B virus (HBV), the hepatitis C virus (HCV), drug-resistant organisms (DROs) and radioactive waste. Therefore, it is important that all medical waste related to patient care be treated as potentially hazardous.

Examples of medical waste include:

- Sharps
- Blood
- Body fluids
- Specimens
- Soiled laundry
- Dirty dressings.

Always dispose of medical waste properly.

Bloodborne Pathogens

Your employer has an Exposure Control Plan to OSHA's Bloodborne Pathogens Standard. Make sure you are familiar with both documents. Treat all medical waste and blood as contaminated and act accordingly.

- Needlesticks are one of the most common ways diseases are transmitted on the job.
- Use sharps with engineered sharps injury protection devices or needleless systems whenever appropriate.”
- Do not bend, recap, shear or break used needles and other sharps.
- Immediately after using sharps, place in an appropriate, puncture-resistant, leakproof, color-coded container.

Other safe procedures include:

- Minimize splashing, spraying and spattering when performing procedures involving blood or other potentially infectious materials.
- Red or red-orange labels, bags or containers with the biohazard symbol warn you that contents are biohazardous materials.
- Don't eat, drink, smoke, apply cosmetics or handle contact lenses where there is a reasonable likelihood of occupational exposure.
- Don't keep food or drink in refrigerator, freezer, cabinets or on shelves, countertops or benches where blood or other potentially infectious materials are present.

Good Housekeeping

Your facility's Exposure Control Plan lists specific methods and schedules for cleaning surfaces that may be contaminated. Some general rules:

- Protective coverings on equipment and surfaces must be replaced if contaminated or at the end of the work shift.
- Use a broom and dustpan or tongs to pick up broken glass — not your hands.
- Handle contaminated laundry as little as possible and with minimal agitation.
- Use leakproof bags to transfer contaminated laundry.

Personal Protective Equipment

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is a vital barrier between your body and danger. PPE may include:

- Gloves
- Gown
- Apron
- Goggles
- Mask
- Face shield
- Mouthpiece
- Resuscitation bags or other ventilation devices.

Disposable single-use gloves are the most common type of PPE. Heavy-duty utility gloves are used for housekeeping duties and direct contact with medical waste.

- Cover cuts and abrasions with bandages before being gloved.
- Replace PPE as soon as practical if contaminated or immediately if torn or punctured and no longer offering barrier protection.

Hazard Communication

In addition to medical waste, there are other hazardous substances on the job such as cleaning solvents, anesthetics and radioactive materials.

Your written HazCom Program provides a range of information and training. Become familiar with it and know where it is located. In particular, it will tell you:

- Which hazards are in your work area
- How to identify and read Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs)
- What you should do if a label is missing or torn
- What happens when substances are mixed
- How to dispose of hazardous substances
- What first aid to give in an emergency.

Radiation Safety

There are two primary ways you can encounter radiation in a healthcare environment:

- External beam sources, like x-rays or gamma rays.
- Radioactive sources used internally for patient diagnosis or treatment.

Follow these guidelines to avoid harmful effects of exposure:

- Minimize your time exposed to radiation source.
- Maximize distance between yourself and radiation source.
- Use shielding and protective clothing when appropriate.
- Never touch anything with a radioactive warning label unless you are trained and authorized to do so.
- When caring for patients being treated with radioactive materials, dispose of syringes, radioactive liquid and other waste properly.
- You may enter the room of a patient being treated with radiation to perform normal duties, but don't spend time doing nonvital tasks unless authorized.

Questions about radiation? Ask the Radiation Safety Officer or Physician in Charge.

Handwashing & Glove Removal

Handwashing keeps you from transferring hazardous materials from your hands to other areas of your body, patients or the environment.

- Wash hands after handling or touching any potentially contaminated substance or surface.
- No barrier is 100 percent effective. After each activity, remove gloves and wash hands before putting on a new pair.
- When removing gloves, peel one glove off from outside top and hold in gloved hand. With exposed hand, peel second glove down from top tucking first glove inside second. Don't touch outside of glove. Dispose of entire bundle promptly in the proper waste receptacle.
- Wash hands with an approved waterless antiseptic agent. Apply recommended amount and rub over all surfaces of the hands with soap and running water for a minimum of 15 seconds.
- If infectious material gets on your hands, the sooner you wash it off, the less your chance of becoming infected.
- If your skin becomes soiled with blood or other protenacious material, wash with non-abrasive soap and running water immediately.

- If mucous membranes are exposed to contamination, flush with water for about 15 minutes. Then seek medical attention.
- If there is no sink in your work area, use an approved waterless antiseptic hand cleanser. If visibly soiled, you must still wash hands with soap and running water as soon as possible.
- Wash hands between patients so as not to transfer contaminants.

QUIZ

1. True False Wet floors can cause slips and falls.
2. True False To avoid back injury, always bend and twist when you lift.
3. True False It's okay to break off the third prong to get a plug to fit into an outlet.
4. True False You should never work around electrical appliances when your surroundings are wet.
5. True False During a fire, you should stay low to avoid inhaling smoke.
6. True False Disinfection is more effective than sterilization.
7. True False Blood and other body fluids may carry deadly viruses.
8. True False Your facility's Exposure Control Plan is designed to work with OSHA's Bloodborne Pathogens Standard to protect healthcare workers.
9. True False Used sharps should be recapped and discarded in a leakproof container.
10. True False Follow your facility's guidelines to dispose of medical waste properly.
11. True False You should never use your hands to pick up broken glass.
12. True False Contaminated laundry should be transported in open carts.
13. True False You should cover cuts with bandages before donning gloves.
14. True False PPE can include ventilation devices.
15. True False Your facility's written HazCom Program will tell you which hazards are in your work area.
16. True False To avoid harmful exposure, minimize the distance between yourself and the radiation source.
17. True False Address radiation questions to the Radiation Safety Officer.
18. True False Wash your hands after handling any potentially hazardous material.
19. True False If you have skin contact with blood, wash with non-abrasive soap and running water immediately.
20. True False If mucous membranes are exposed to blood, flush with water for 15 minutes and seek medical attention.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRAINING

I have read and understand the training handbook, *Safety Orientation: For Your Own Good*. I have also completed and passed the comprehensive quiz at the conclusion of this handbook.

Employee's Signature

Date

Trainer's Name

Date

NOTE: This record may be included in the employee's personnel or training file.

SAFETY ORIENTATION: FOR YOUR OWN GOOD

Answers to Quiz

1. True.
2. False. Always avoid bending and twisting your back when lifting.
3. False. Never break off the third prong of an electrical plug.
4. True.
5. True.
6. False. Sterilization is more effective than disinfection.
7. True.
8. True.
9. False. Used sharps should never be recapped, but should always be discarded in the proper leakproof container.
10. True.
11. True.
12. False. Contaminated laundry should be transported in leakproof bags.
13. True.
14. True.
15. True.
16. False. Maximize the distance between you and the radiation source to minimize radiation exposure.
17. True.
18. True.
19. True.
20. True.