

How Can You Encourage Reporting?

- Establish a mandatory policy to report all exposures.
- Ensure employees know what an exposure is.
- Regularly remind your workers to quickly report all exposures to blood and other body fluids.
- Assure your employees that the report of an exposure will not adversely affect their employment status or performance evaluations.
- Have a system in place for reporting and responding to exposure reports.
- Ensure reports are handled promptly and confidentially.
- Ensure all supervisors and managers know what to do if an employee reports an exposure incident.
- Include reporting procedures and your facility's yearly exposure statistics in annual bloodborne pathogens training.

Get the word out! Tell your employees about the policy, the steps you are taking to implement it, and what they need to do.

For Further Information

- CDC: www.cdc.gov
- CDC's Exposure to Blood: What Healthcare Personnel Need to Know: www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/pdf/bbp/Exp_to_Blood.pdf
- NIOSH: www.cdc.gov/niosh/
- NIOSH BBP: www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/bbp/correctional
- OSHA: www.osha.gov
- OSHA BBP: www.osha.gov/SLTC/bloodbornepathogens/

To receive NIOSH documents or information about occupational safety and health topics contact NIOSH at
Telephone: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)
Text telephone (TTY): 1-888-232-6348
E-mail: cdcinfo@cdc.gov

or visit the NIOSH Web site at www.cdc.gov/niosh.

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Encourage Your Workers to Report Bloodborne Pathogen Exposures



A vital tool in the fight against bloodborne pathogens.



NIOSH National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health



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Correctional health care workers are at risk for occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens, including hepatitis B virus, hepatitis C virus, and human immunodeficiency virus.

Exposure incidents may occur through the following:

- Needlesticks or cuts from other sharp instruments and objects contaminated with another person's blood.
- Contact of the eyes, nose, mouth, or broken skin with blood or other potentially infectious materials.

Some employees are reluctant to report exposure incidents. Encourage your employees to report all potential exposures.

This way, you can carry out your responsibility to take the appropriate post-exposure actions to protect your workers, their families, and the public against infection from bloodborne pathogens.

Why Are Employees Reluctant to Report Exposures?

Many employees do not report exposures. Although the rate of underreporting is difficult to ascertain, some studies estimate about 50 percent of workers do not report exposures.

In a recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) study,¹ employees gave many reasons for not reporting exposures:

- They feel it is a hassle to report.
- They believe there is no time to report.
- They fear losing their jobs.



- They think it may result in a negative performance assessment.
- They worry that their confidentiality will not be assured.
- They believe the exposure may have been their fault.
- They were not wearing the proper personal protection equipment (PPE).
- They feel it may be embarrassing if coworkers find out.
- They think that wiping blood or other body fluids off their clothes or skin is sufficient.
- They do not know what an exposure is.

Are some of *your* workers failing to report exposures because of these or other reasons?

¹ NIOSH. Emerging Issues in Health Care Worker and Bloodborne Pathogen Research: Options and Recommendations from Integrated Health Communication Strategy for Correctional Health Care Workers, First Responders, and Police Officers, Revision 1, Prepared by Westat, June 7, 2005.

Why Should Employees Report All Exposures?

First, reporting exposures to blood will help protect your workers and their families. It allows you to provide the appropriate assessment and treatment.



Second, by documenting exposures, you can identify causes and prevent them from occurring again. This keeps your workers on the job, reducing costs in the long run. Finally, remember that prevention costs less than treatment.

A vital tool in the fight against bloodborne pathogens.

