

# Ebola

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## Ebola Information for Law Enforcement Professionals in the United States

### How Ebola is Spread

People can get Ebola by

- Direct contact with infected body fluids (blood, stool, saliva, sweat, urine, vomit, semen)
- Touching objects (like needles) that have the virus on them

Ebola is **not** spread through the air or by water or, in general, by food. However, in Africa, Ebola may be spread as a result of handling bushmeat (wild animals hunted for food) and contact with infected bats.

A person could have been exposed to Ebola if he or she (or a close contact) has traveled from a country with an Ebola outbreak (<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/outbreaks/2014-west-africa/distribution-map.html>) within the previous 21 days.

Symptoms of Ebola include

- Fever
- Severe headache
- Muscle pain
- Weakness
- Tiredness
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Stomach pain
- Unexplained bleeding or bruising.

**Direct contact** with body fluids can happen through broken skin or through the eyes, nose, or mouth.

It occurs by touch, droplet splashes, or skin punctures from contaminated sharp items like needles.

## Risk of Exposure

<b>No Contact</b>	<b>Possible Contact</b>
<p>It is very unlikely that law enforcement personnel will encounter a person infected with Ebola.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Infection cannot occur without direct contact with the body fluids of a patient with Ebola.</li><li>• Many diseases cause fever, vomiting, and diarrhea.</li><li>• Law enforcement officers may respond to a 9-1-1 call and may be alerted by the dispatcher that the person has recent travel history to areas with Ebola outbreaks, or they may encounter someone with Ebola-like symptoms and ask them about their travel history.</li></ul>	<p>Law enforcement may come into contact with someone who has been exposed but is not symptomatic when performing duties like enforcing quarantine orders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Travelers are being screened at airports in West African countries with Ebola outbreaks (<a href="http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/outbreaks/2014-west-africa/distribution-map.html">http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/outbreaks/2014-west-africa/distribution-map.html</a>) to identify, before departure, any traveler who has symptoms of Ebola.</li><li>• Passengers who have traveled from or through these countries are screened as they arrive in the United States.</li><li>• Passengers who have symptoms of Ebola are not allowed to enter public areas of the airport but are safely transported to a healthcare facility for evaluation. Passengers who are identified to be within the 21-day window of exposure are referred to state and local public health departments for monitoring and movement procedures.</li><li>• Some people might develop symptoms of infection only after they enter the country. Any law enforcement personnel providing emergency medical care should refer to NIOSH's list of resources for emergency medical service workers: <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/ebola/healthcare.html#emer">http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/ebola/healthcare.html#emer</a>.</li></ul>

## Protect Yourself

- Practice careful hygiene. Wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Have a trained Emergency Medical Service/Emergency Medical Technician (EMS/EMT) assess and transport anyone you think might have Ebola to a healthcare facility.
- Only trained personnel wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) should have contact with patients who have or are under investigation for Ebola.
- Avoid clothing and any items that may have come in contact with that person's vomit, blood, or other body fluids. These items can include tissues, waste bags, bedding, needles, and medical equipment.
- Report to your supervisor or local health officials anyone who appears to be sick and is suspected of being infected with Ebola.
- Report any areas or items that you suspect may have been contaminated by that person.
- Avoid unprotected contact with any person's blood, other potentially infectious materials, and areas contaminated with blood or other body fluids.
- Learn your employer's plan for exposure control and participate in all-hands training on the use of PPE for contact with body fluids.

## Contaminated Surfaces

**Unless you have been specifically trained on and are wearing appropriate PPE, you should *not* try to clean an area that is possibly Ebola-contaminated. If you suspect an area has been contaminated**

- Prevent anyone from accessing the area.
- Alert others in the area, and notify your supervisor or other personnel designated to respond to these situations.

Employers are responsible for ensuring workers are protected from exposure to Ebola virus and from harmful levels of chemicals used for cleaning and disinfection. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards, including those for Bloodborne Pathogens (29 CFR 1910.1030), establish requirements for protecting workers and must be followed by employers. For residential decontamination, please refer to the CDC Interim Guidance for the U.S. Residence Decontamination for Ebola Virus Disease (Ebola) and Removal of Contaminated Waste:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/residential-decontamination.html>.

## Additional Information

- NIOSH Workplace Safety and Health Topics—Ebola
- OSHA Fact Sheet—Cleaning and Decontamination of Ebola on Surfaces
- OSHA Fact Sheet—OSHA's Bloodborne Pathogens Standard
- OSHA Fact Sheet—PPE Selection Matrix for Occupational Exposure to Ebola Virus

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