

Ebola

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Ebola Information for Airport Baggage and Cargo Handlers

How Ebola Is Spread

People can get Ebola by

- Direct contact with infected body fluids (blood, stool, saliva, sweat, urine, vomit, or 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.

Risk of Exposure

Your chances of being exposed to Ebola are low when you handle baggage, packages, and other cargo at the airport or pass through the airport on your way to and from your work area. Baggage and cargo handlers typically won't have direct contact with passengers, their blood or body fluids. The following steps are in place at the airport to prevent Ebola exposure:

- Public health workers will screen passengers for Ebola symptoms as they leave countries with Ebola outbreaks as well as when they arrive in the United States.
- Passengers who are screened and have symptoms of Ebola will not be allowed to enter public areas of the airport.
- However, a few people may develop symptoms after they pass through screening. Even if someone does develop symptoms after passing screening, you would need to have close contact or touch their blood or body fluids to have a chance of being infected with Ebola.

Protect Yourself

- Wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Only trained personnel wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) should have contact with patients under investigation for Ebola.
- Avoid clothing and any items that may have come in contact with a person's vomit, blood, or other body fluids. These items can include tissues, waste bags, bedding, needles, and medical equipment.
- Report any areas or items that you suspect may have been contaminated. As a routine precaution, you should always avoid unprotected contact with blood, other potentially infectious materials, or areas contaminated with those body fluids.
- Learn your employer's plan for exposure control and, if needed, participate in training on the use of PPE for contact with body fluids.

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.

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

Contaminated Surfaces

Unless you have been specifically trained and provided appropriate PPE for cleaning suspect Ebola-contaminated areas, you should NOT try to clean the area. 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 that workers are protected from exposure to Ebola virus and 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 should be followed by employers.

Employers' Responsibilities

To help protect you from Ebola, your employer should have a health and safety plan that

- Ensures you know about Ebola, how it is spread, your chances of being exposed, and what to do in situations where areas or surfaces are contaminated with Ebola
- Designates a person to respond to Ebola concerns at the airport and informs you who this person is and how to contact him or her
- Explains specific public health procedures at this airport to monitor travelers from Ebola-affected areas
- Provides appropriate PPE and trains you on its use, if necessary
- Trains you on good handwashing practices and other routine infection control precautions (e.g., using gloves)—this will help prevent the spread of many diseases, including Ebola
- Shows you where to access soap and clean running water or alcohol-based hand sanitizers containing at least 60% alcohol

More Information

- NIOSH Workplace Safety and Health Topic—Ebola: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/ebola/>
- CDC Ebola website: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/>
- CDC Ebola Guidance for Airlines: <http://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/air/managing-sick-travelers/ebola-guidance-airlines.html>
- OSHA Ebola website: <http://www.osha.gov/ebola/>
- OSHA Fact Sheet—Cleaning and Decontamination of Ebola on Surfaces: https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA_FS-3756.pdf
- OSHA Fact Sheet—Bloodborne Pathogens Standard: https://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_BloodborneFacts/bbfact01.pdf
- 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) | TTY: 1-888-232-6348 | Website: www.cdc.gov/info