



Incident Response Job Aid

Exposure incidents in the laboratory can occur at any time. Knowing and practicing the proper response and reporting procedures for incidents involving blood and other potentially infectious materials (OPIM) is important. These procedures are described below.

Exposed Worker – Immediate Exposure Incident Response

If someone is exposed to blood or OPIM, the **employee** should immediately:

1. Notify co-workers in the laboratory about the exposure so they can assist, if possible.
2. Remove any contaminated PPE before proceeding to the exposure-specific responses below.

For the exposure listed, the exposed worker should:

3. **Needlestick and Cut Exposures**
Wash needlesticks and cuts with soap and water for **at least 15 minutes**.
4. **Splash Exposure**
Flush splashes to the nose, mouth, or skin with water for **at least 15 minutes**.
5. **Eye Exposure**
Irrigate eyes with clean water, saline, or sterile wash for **at least 15 minutes**.
6. **All Exposures**
Promptly **report** all exposures to the laboratory supervisor to ensure that appropriate follow-up care is received.
 - o The incident should be documented and used to update the laboratory risk assessments to design corrective and preventative actions to avoid future incidents.

Refer to the laboratory standard operating procedure to determine if any additional steps must be taken following a blood or OPIM exposure.

Employer of Exposed Worker – Postexposure Evaluation

Following worker exposure and reporting, the **employer** must:

1. Ensure an immediate, confidential medical evaluation and follow-up assessment is available for the worker. This evaluation must be:
 - o At no charge to the worker
 - o At a time and place that is convenient for the worker
 - o Performed by or under the supervision of a licensed physician or other licensed healthcare professional
2. Offer the exposed worker postexposure medication for HBV, HCV, and HIV, according to the healthcare provider's instructions.
3. Offer a postexposure follow-up that includes counseling the worker about their infection status and the possible implications of the exposure.
 - o Counseling should address test results and interpretations, along with information on how to protect personal contacts.
4. Perform a follow-up that includes an evaluation of reported illnesses related to exposure.

References:

Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2007-157. Updated June 6, 2014. Accessed February 16, 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2007-157/default.html>
OSHA Fact Sheet: OSHA's Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Incidents. Occupational Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Dept of Labor. January 2011. Accessed February 16, 2024. <https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/bbfact04.pdf>

This job aid is a component of the free, on-demand CDC training course "Fundamentals of Bloodborne Pathogens." Find the course at reach.cdc.gov/

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