

## PATHWAYS ABILITIES SOCIETY

### **POLICY: EXPOSURE CONTROL PLAN FOR BLOOD BORNE PATHOGENS**

**Applies to:** All Personnel, Volunteers and Persons Served

#### **PREAMBLE**

Pathways Abilities Society is committed to ensuring the safekeeping of all individuals and staff with regard to health and safety. Implementation of the following measures and procedures are required in order to uphold a safe and practiced level of efficiency in exposure control of blood borne pathogens.

#### Definitions:

**Occupational Exposure:** reasonably anticipated harmful contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials (OPIM's) that may result from the performance of a worker's duties.

**Blood-borne Pathogens:** pathogenic microorganisms present in human blood and OPIM's that can cause disease in humans. These pathogens include but are not limited to hepatitis B virus (HBV), hepatitis C virus (HCV) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

**Other Potentially Infectious Materials (OPIM):** Other materials (besides blood) that can be sources of blood-borne pathogens i.e. semen, vaginal secretions, cerebrospinal fluid, synovial fluid, pleural fluid, pericardial fluid, peritoneal fluid, amniotic fluid, saliva, any body fluid visibly contaminated with blood, all body fluids in situations where it is difficult to differentiate between body fluids and tissues.

**Harmful Contact:** An exposure incident to blood or OPIM's through:

- Percutaneous injury (injury through the skin from a contaminated sharp item such as a needle).
- Contact with the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose or mouth.
- Contact with non-intact skin (healing wound less than 3 days old or lesion causing disruption of outer skin layer).
- Bites.

#### **POLICY**

Pathways Abilities Society will ensure that our personnel, volunteers and persons served are protected from occupational exposure to blood-borne pathogens and that it is done in a manner that complies with the BC Workers Compensation Act, Occupational Health and Safety Regulation and human rights legislation.

This exposure control plan covers all employees, as it is reasonably anticipated that they may have harmful contact with blood or OPIM's as a result of performing their normal job duties.

The purpose of this exposure control plan is to eliminate or minimize the employees' risk of occupational exposure to blood-borne pathogens in blood and OPIM's, as well as to reduce the risk of infection should exposure occur.

Pathways Abilities Society will:

- Conduct the risk identification and assessment of the employees' potential occupational exposure to blood-borne pathogens.
- Implement engineering controls, safe work practices and written work procedures to eliminate or reduce the employees' potential exposure to blood-borne pathogens.
- Provide employees with appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Ensure employees are provided with education and training on blood-borne pathogens and the exposure control plan (per section 4, education and training).
- Ensure that all pertinent records are maintained.
- Set up a check system to ensure that employees who have had an exposure incident to blood or OPIM's are medically evaluated, then seen by a physician for follow-up if deemed necessary by the medical evaluation.
- Ensure that accident investigations of employees' exposure incidents to blood or OPIM's are conducted and corrective actions are taken to prevent similar incidents from occurring.
- Annually review the exposure control plan and update it as necessary.
- Ensure employees are adhering to the Universal Precautions and Infectious Disease policy and procedures.

The supervisor will:

- Advise employees with respect to blood-borne pathogen hazards.
- Advise that employees follow safe work practices and written work procedures.
- Advise that employees wear appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Advise that employees receive education and training on blood-borne pathogens and the exposure control plan initially and at the time of occupational first aid certification and renewal.
- Advise that the post-exposure health management procedure is followed for employees' exposure incidents to blood or OPIM's.
- Initiate accident investigations of exposure incidents to blood or OPIM's.

The employees will:

- Follow safe work practices and written work procedures.
- Wear the appropriate personal protective equipment provided.
- Attend education and training (occupational first aid training courses and additional company training sessions).
- Follow the post-exposure health management procedure in the event of an exposure incident to blood or OPIM's.
- Participate in accident investigations of exposure incidents to blood or OPIM's.

## RISK IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT

All employees have the potential for occupational exposure to blood-borne pathogens. Employees may have harmful contact with blood or OPIM's via percutaneous injury, mucous membrane contact and non-intact skin contact. It is reasonably anticipated that such contact may occur when support workers are providing occupational first aid; including rendering first aid and performing post-treatment and accident scene clean up.

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

All employees will be educated and trained regarding blood-borne pathogens prior to initial assignment to work. The occupational first aid training course and materials “St. John Ambulance, Safety Orientated First Aid - Emergency Level, Adult Care” will provide the majority of the education and training such as:

- An explanation of blood-borne diseases, their symptoms and effects, and modes of transmission.
- An explanation of the appropriate methods of recognizing tasks and activities that may involve exposure to blood and OPIM's.
- An explanation of engineering and safe work practice controls that will prevent or reduce exposure to blood-borne pathogens including their use and limitations.
- Information on personal protective equipment, including appropriate selection, use, removal, handling, cleaning, decontamination, inspection, maintenance, storage, disposal and limitations.
- An explanation of the post-exposure health management procedure for an employee to follow if an exposure incident to blood or OPIM's occurs.

Additional worksite-specific orientation, education and training will be provided by the area supervisor and will include:

- Applicable sections of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations.
- An explanation of the organization's exposure control plan regarding blood-borne pathogens and where to access it.
- Control procedures specific to the worksite (e.g. location of sharps disposal containers, pocket masks and wash facilities; types and location of personal protective equipment).
- Information on the hepatitis B vaccine, including information on its benefits, effectiveness, safety, method of administration and its availability.

All employees will review the blood-borne pathogens and the exposure control plan policy and procedure annually in the month of January.

## HEALTH MONITORING

As a condition of employment, employees are required to have a hepatitis B vaccination. The vaccination (series of 3 shots given at 0, 1 & 6 months) will be started within 10 working days of their initial assignment as an employee.

Employees may not decline the hepatitis B vaccination.

### Effective/Revision Date

March 22, 2004  
September 12, 2011  
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### Board Approval

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