

# TOOLBOX TALK



## DISCUSSION TOPIC: UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

Universal precautions are a set of strategies developed to prevent transmission of blood borne pathogens. The focus on universal precautions is on blood and selected body fluids such as cerebrospinal fluid, pleural fluid, and amniotic fluid.

### What Are Bloodborne Pathogens?

Bloodborne Pathogens are infectious microorganisms in human blood that can cause disease in humans. These pathogens include, but are not limited to, hepatitis B (HBV), hepatitis C (HCV), and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). In order to be safe and not to discriminate, assume that everyone is infectious.



### How are individuals Exposed to Bloodborne Pathogens?

Exposure through a needle stick or another sharp object is a common way workers in the healthcare industry, emergency responders, and housekeepers are exposed to bloodborne pathogens. Exposure can also occur when an individual is exposed through contact with infectious materials to the nose, eyes, mouth, or broken skin.



### Work Practices to Prevent Infection

Protect yourself by following these steps:

- **Cover Cuts** – if you have cuts or open sores on your skin, cover them with a plastic bandage
- **Wear Gloves** – If there is any risk of coming into contact with blood or other bodily fluids wear latex gloves. Gloves should only be worn once and disposed of in a plastic garbage bag
- **Wash Hands** – Wash your hands with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds after you have had contact with blood or other bodily fluids. Use hand lotion to help keep your hands from becoming chapped or irritated. Intact skin is your first defense against infection!
- **Discard Garbage** – Use caution when disposing of garbage and other waste that may contain infected materials or used needles
- **Clean up** - Spills of blood or other bodily fluids should be cleaned up with a fresh mixture of bleach (1 part) and water (9 parts). Remember to wear latex gloves during clean up!

