

Bloodborne Pathogens: Before Helping

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Why this matters

Helping an injured coworker can expose responders to blood. Prepare protection, trained help and follow-up before an emergency occurs.

Objective: Locate blood-contact protection and explain the exposure-reporting route.

Key hazards or failure points

Blood splashes; contaminated sharps; unavailable gloves; unprotected cleanup; delayed exposure reporting.

Practical controls

- Call emergency help promptly when needed. Provide care within training and dispatcher guidance while using available blood-contact protection.
- Keep suitable gloves and splash protection accessible. Assign contaminated cleanup and waste handling to trained, equipped people.
- After exposure, wash affected skin or flush affected mucous membranes promptly; report immediately and obtain prompt medical evaluation through the response procedure.

Verify It in the Field

The designated responder locates protective supplies and checks sizes, packaging and condition against the approved inventory without consuming emergency stock.

The supervisor confirms trained coverage, emergency access and the actual contact for urgent exposure evaluation during this shift.

The cleanup lead confirms suitable collection containers and the approved cleanup procedure; no worker handles contaminated sharps by hand.

Stop and reassess

Keep unprotected people away from contamination. Summon trained help for missing protection or unknown cleanup hazards; report actual exposure immediately.

Ask the crew

1. Where is protection for blood splashes?
2. Who handles contaminated cleanup?
3. How do we obtain urgent exposure evaluation?

Use this HOP tool — Task preview: Before work, walk through an imagined injury using words only. Name who calls for help, who brings protection and who handles contamination afterward. Locate the actual supplies and exposure contact. Record any readiness gap without opening sterile supplies or practicing on a person.

Sources: OSHA construction bloodborne-pathogen interpretation; OSHA 1926.50: first aid; OSHA 1910.1030: bloodborne pathogens. HOP concepts adapted from DOE-HDBK-1028-2009, Vol. 2 (June 2009). No claim to original U.S. Government work; no government endorsement implied.

Free next step: JHA/JSA planning and field-verification worksheet

Expanded guidance and separate forms: toddjeromejenkins.com/toolbox-talks/bloodborne-pathogens-first-aid-readiness