

OSHA Blood Borne Pathogen Training: 2015 Update for Offshore Workers

Blood, Sweat, and Tears

It is uncommon offshore, but with occasional minor accidents or in close living conditions, it is possible to come in contact with someone else's blood. For instance there may be a bloody wound, spilled blood, blood on clothing, bloody vomit, or a sharp medical instrument or needle. To be considered significantly infectious, there should be visible blood. Normal saliva, sweat, urine, or tears do not contain significant blood. Also, to pose a danger to you, the blood must get under your skin, splash in your mouth, or get inside your nose or eyes. Simply getting blood on normal intact skin and wiping it off poses no significant risk to you. But if the blood gets under the skin, only a tiny amount of blood (blood to blood contact) can lead to infection.

Gloves and protective eyewear
prevent many blood exposures

Three Dog Night

Blood can carry dangerous diseases. Three highly infectious viruses that attack us:

1. **HIV – Immune system crippler.** HIV causes AIDS and reduces the ability to fight infection. There is a 3 in 1000 chance of infection after an HIV positive needlestick.
2. **Hepatitis B – Highly infectious liver disease.** 1 in 3 persons exposed to Hepatitis B become infected. Vaccinate now.
3. **Hepatitis C - Silent & slow liver killer.** Less infectious than Hep B but more than HIV. Leads to cirrhosis and liver cancer.

Hepatitis C can often be cured early.
Ask your doctor about testing.

The Who

Many do not know they are already infected.

Hepatitis C: 3 out of 4 infected are unaware
3.2 million in U.S. carry virus.

HIV: 1 out of 7 infected are unaware

Hepatitis B: 5% of world's population carries.



The Four Tops

The four most important actions to take after exposure to someone's blood can save your life and protect the health of you and your family.

1. **Clean.** Quickly rinse (eye) or wash skin thoroughly. Bleed a needlestick/small wound briefly (1-2 minutes) but do not aggressively squeeze which can cause deep tissue damage and lead to infection.
2. **Notify.** Call the Medic. It is normal to feel embarrassed, try to hide, or pretend there is no risk after you are exposed to blood. Remember that HIV and Hepatitis will cause serious disease that will change your life. For HIV and Hepatitis B, immediate medications (within hours) will reduce the risk of infection. For Hepatitis C, early treatment can lead to a cure.
3. **Protect.** If the Medic advises that you have had a serious exposure, you should avoid sharing blood items, razors, toothbrushes. You should also use barriers (condom) during sex. This will prevent transmitting disease to others.
4. **Monitor.** Several months of testing are recommended to check for early infection after an exposure. An expert doctor (Occupational or Infectious Diseases) will explain when and how you will be tested. Be sure to remember to return for these tests.

Earth Wind and Fire

If you manage waste water; if you are on the Medical Task Force; if you are a Fire Team member; then your risks are considered higher than average. See the Medic for the 100% protective Hepatitis B vaccine series of 3.

OSHA requires that your employer send you for expert medical care after any serious blood exposure.