

SOP: Protocol for Handling Exposure to Infectious Materials

This SOP details the **protocol for handling exposure to infectious materials**, outlining the necessary steps for immediate response, decontamination procedures, medical evaluation, and reporting requirements. It aims to minimize health risks by ensuring proper protective measures, safe handling techniques, and timely management of exposure incidents to protect personnel and prevent further contamination.

1. Purpose

To establish standardized procedures to follow in the event of exposure to infectious materials, ensuring the safety and health of all personnel and compliance with regulatory requirements.

2. Scope

This protocol applies to all staff, contractors, and visitors who may potentially be exposed to infectious materials in the workplace.

3. Definitions

- **Exposure:** Contact (via percutaneous injury, mucous membrane, or non-intact skin) with potentially infectious materials.
- **Infectious materials:** Biological agents (bacteria, viruses, fungi, parasites, human/animal tissue, blood, body fluids) that may cause disease.
- **PPE:** Personal Protective Equipment such as gloves, masks, gowns, eye protection, and respirators.

4. Responsibilities

- **All Personnel:** Report exposures immediately, comply with this SOP, and attend relevant training.
- **Supervisors:** Ensure staff are trained, equipped, and report incidents promptly. Facilitate post-exposure procedures and documentation.
- **Occupational Health Officer:** Provide medical evaluation and manage follow-up care.

5. Immediate Response to Exposure

1. **Remove oneself from further exposure.**
2. **Decontamination Procedures:**
 - **Skin exposure:** Wash affected area thoroughly with soap and water for at least 15 minutes.
 - **Eye exposure:** Flush eyes at eyewash station for at least 15 minutes, keeping eyes open and rolling them frequently.
 - **Mouth/nose exposure:** Rinse mouth/nose with water without swallowing.
 - **Puncture wound:** Encourage bleeding, wash with soap and water. Do not squeeze aggressively.
3. **Remove contaminated clothing and PPE** safely to avoid further exposure.
4. **Seek medical evaluation**, even if exposure seems minor.

6. Medical Evaluation & Treatment

1. Report to Occupational Health or designated medical facility immediately.
2. Provide details regarding the nature of exposure (agent, route, amount, circumstances).
3. Follow post-exposure prophylaxis, vaccination, or treatment as advised by healthcare professionals.
4. Attend all follow-up appointments and complete required testing.

7. Incident Reporting

1. Notify immediate supervisor as soon as possible.
2. Complete incident report form within 24 hours, detailing exposure circumstances, response actions, and personnel involved.

3. Submit report to safety department for record-keeping and further investigation, if necessary.

8. Documentation & Follow-up

- Maintain records of exposure incident, medical evaluations, treatments administered, and outcome monitoring.
- Conduct exposure review to evaluate root cause and implement corrective actions to prevent recurrence.

9. Training

- Personnel shall receive initial and annual training on this protocol, use of PPE, and safe handling of infectious materials.

10. References

- OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standard (29 CFR 1910.1030)
- CDC Guidelines for Infection Control
- Institutional Safety Manuals

11. Review & Revision

This SOP will be reviewed annually and updated as needed based on regulatory changes or incident learnings.