

## How Can You Encourage Reporting?

- Establish a policy that all potential exposures must be reported!
- Identify and address issues, workplace culture, or barriers that discourage reporting.
- Make sure employees know what an exposure is.
- Explain the risks of infection.
- Establish an easy-to-use system for reporting and evaluating exposures.
- Ensure reports are handled promptly and confidentially.
- Make sure all employees and managers understand the department's reporting protocol.
- Cover reporting procedures in the initial and annual bloodborne pathogens training.
- Regularly remind your workers to promptly report all potential bloodborne pathogens exposures.
- Assure your employees that reporting an exposure will not affect their job or performance evaluation.
- Keep a record of exposures. Look for patterns of exposure and seek solutions to prevent future exposures.
- Show workers how reporting helps prevent future exposures.

**Get the word out! Tell your employees about the policy, the steps you are taking to implement it, and how they can help.**

### For Additional Information on compliance issues:

- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)  
Bloodborne Pathogens Web site and phone number:  
[www.osha.gov/SLTC/bloodbornepathogens/index.html](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/bloodbornepathogens/index.html)  
1-800-321-OSHA

### on health issues:

- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)  
Bloodborne Pathogens Web site and phone number:  
[www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/bbp/](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/bbp/)  
1-800-CDC-INFO

To receive NIOSH documents or information about occupational safety and health topics contact NIOSH at  
Telephone: **1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)**  
TTY: **1-888-232-6348**  
E-mail: **cdcinfo@cdc.gov**

or visit the NIOSH Web site at [www.cdc.gov/niosh](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh).

For a monthly update on news at NIOSH, subscribe to NIOSH *eNews* by visiting [www.cdc.gov/niosh/eNews](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/eNews).

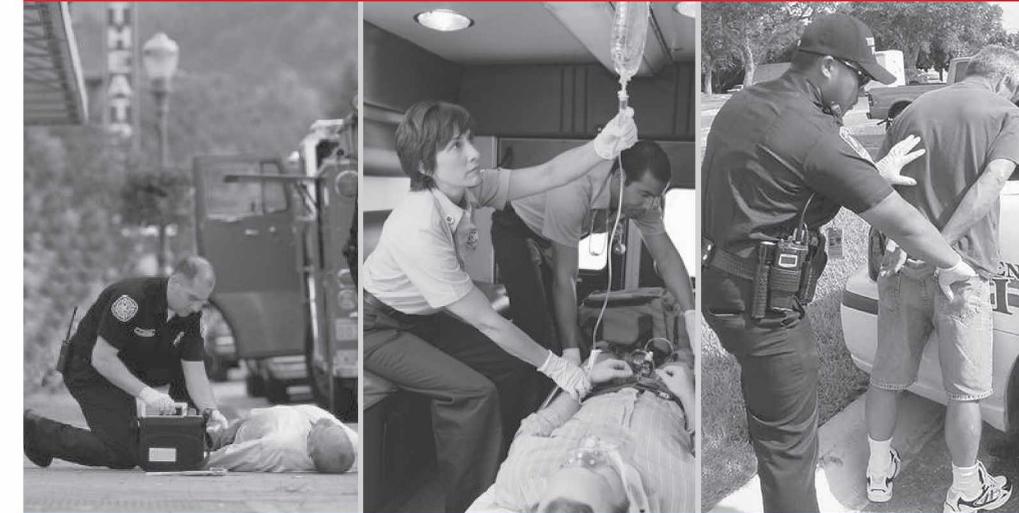
DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 2008-118

July 2008

SAFER • HEALTHIER • PEOPLE™

# Encourage Your Workers to Report Bloodborne Pathogen Exposures

*Reporting is a vital tool in the fight against bloodborne pathogens*



**Protect yourself.**

**Protect your family.**

**Protect the public.**



First responders are at risk for occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens, including hepatitis B virus, hepatitis C virus, and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Exposure incidents may occur through the following:

- **Needlesticks or cuts from sharp objects contaminated with another person's blood.**
- **Contact of the eyes, mouth, nose, or broken skin with blood or other potentially infectious body fluids.**

Some employees are reluctant to report exposure incidents. Encourage your employees to report all exposures.

This way, you can carry out your responsibility to take appropriate post-exposure actions to protect your workers, their families, and the public against infection from bloodborne pathogens.

## **Why Are Employees Reluctant to Report Exposures?**

Although rates of underreporting are difficult to ascertain, studies estimate that high percentages of workers do not report all exposures.

Employees give many reasons for not reporting exposures:

- They do not think they will get an infection from the exposure.
- They think the exposure may have been their fault.
- They were not wearing the proper personal protective equipment.



- They are embarrassed by the exposure incident.
- They think it takes too much time away from work to report.
- They think reporting may result in a negative performance evaluation.
- They fear losing their job.
- They think that wiping blood or other body fluids off their skin is sufficient.
- They are not sure whether certain incidents should be considered exposures.

---

Are some of *your* workers failing to report exposures for these reasons?

Encourage your workers to report possible exposure incidents as soon as possible.

## Why Should Employees Report All Exposures?

First, reporting exposures to blood or potentially infectious body fluids will help protect your workers, their families, and the public. It allows you to provide appropriate, prompt, medical assessment and treatment.



Second, by documenting exposures, you can identify causes and prevent them from occurring again. This keeps your workers on the job, reducing costs in the long run.

---

*A vital tool in the fight against bloodborne pathogens.*