



## Communicable Diseases

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### Introduction

This procedure outlines the management of risks associated with work related communicable diseases through contact with animals or animal products or contact with human blood and body fluids including contact with discarded used drug injecting needles.

### Definition

A work related communicable disease is an illnesses caused by micro organisms and transmitted from an infected person or animal to another person or animal.

### Roles and Responsibilities

Line Managers are responsible for:

- implementing this procedure in their area of responsibility and accountability
- identifying work related communicable disease hazards,
- completing risk assessments and implementing appropriate risk control measures in consultation with employees.

Employees are responsible for:

- not placing themselves or others at risk of injury
- reporting work related communicable disease hazards to their manager or health and safety representative as soon as becoming aware of them
- participating in the development of appropriate risk control measures for identified hazards to eliminate or minimise risk
- using control measures and any other action as required, which is designed to protect health and safety
- participating in vaccination programs where available and recommended.

Health and Safety Representatives are responsible for:

- assisting Line Managers and staff in the identification, assessment of communicable disease health and safety risks.

### Procedure

The majority of University work does not involve a risk of contracting a work related communicable disease.

Some people are at risk because their work involves possible exposure through contact with animals or animal products or contact with human blood and body fluids including contact with discarded used drug injecting needles.

Occupational groups who may be at risk in University workplaces include cleaners, plumbing and waste disposal workers, first aid officers, and those who work in biological laboratory or field environments.

### ***Risks from animals or animal products***

The hazards associated with work related communicable disease through contact with animals or animal products in biological laboratory and field environments shall be identified.

Risk assessments in relation to particular communicable disease shall be completed using the risk assessment Form [OHSW 2](#) in OHSW Procedure – Hazard Management.

Risk control measures shall be implemented for communicable disease through contact with animals or animal products. Staff using syringes as part of their work requirements where there is a potential for needlestick injury and subsequent contact with blood and other body fluids are to follow the risk control measures developed for the particular procedure.



Consideration shall be given to:

- eliminating, or redesigning, work practices which expose employees to with animals or animal products
- developing written procedures for safe work practices
- providing education, information and training for employees
- instituting appropriate infection control procedures
- ensuring exposure incidents are managed with immediate consultation with a medical practitioner who has expertise in treating infectious diseases.

### ***Risks from human blood and other body fluids***

The hazards associated with exposure to communicable disease through potential contact with human blood and other body fluids through needlestick injury and/or transmission of blood borne pathogens include Hepatitis B-C & HIV/AIDS.

Any member of staff, visitor or student finding needles or syringes should contact Security immediately on the internal phone, 88888 and advise the location. It should be noted that some workplaces may have developed their own disposal methods for sharps and staff should continue to follow agreed practices for disposal.

Disposal of needles and syringes undertaken by Security staff shall be in accordance with the following:

- sharps shall not be handled; use forceps and a sharps disposal container. (Sharps disposal containers are located in Security offices and occupational health centres. Gloves can be used for this procedure, however, staff should be aware that surgical gloves do not provide a barrier against needlestick injury).
- determine location of needle and or syringe
- take sharps disposal unit and forceps to the site
- using a “non-touch” technique firmly grip the item with forceps and place directly and immediately into the sharps container
- under no circumstances attempt to remove a needle
- wash hands with soap and water on return to the Security office
- complete incident report and forward to OHSW Services.

Security staff are responsible for the disposal of sharps containers, when contents reach the fill line. Disposal shall be made into the sharps waste bin at the School of Pharmacy and Medical Sciences, in the basement of the Reid building, City East Campus.

### ***Needlestick injury or exposure to blood / body fluids***

In the case of a needlestick injury or exposure to blood / body fluids, seek urgent medical attention. Follow the OHSW Procedure – Incident Reporting and Investigation and complete and submit online [OHSW Hazard or Incident Report](#).

### **References**

[University OHSW&IM Policy](#)

[University OHSW Strategic Plan 2009 - 2011 \(PDF 158kb\)](#)

[University Injury Management Strategic Plan 2009 - 2011 \(PDF 85kb\)](#)

[OHSW & Injury Management System \(PDF 128kb\)](#)

[University OHSW Procedure – Hazard Management](#)

[Occupational Health, Safety & Welfare Act, 1986](#)

[Occupational Health, Safety & Welfare Regulations, 2010](#)

[Australian National Council on Aids and National Health and Medical Research Council – Infection Control in the Health Care Setting, 1996](#)

[Australian National Council on AIDS, Bulletin No. 16 Management of Exposure to Blood/Body Fluids Contaminated with Blood, Including Needlestick/Sharps Injuries, with a Potential for HIV or Other Bloodborne Infections, Canberra, 1993](#)