



WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD OF BC

INFORMATION BULLETIN

Health Care Service Providers

February 16, 2005

Re: Universal Precautions

#2005-10

Unfortunately, we will not always be aware of all of a worker's health issues. In order to lessen the risk to your staff we suggest the use of a par-q questionnaire and the use of universal precautions when required.

The following is a summary of several universal precautions from The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/odhsb/biosafe/univers.htm>):

1. **Barrier protection** should be used at all times to prevent skin and mucous membrane contamination with blood, body fluids containing visible blood, or other body fluids (cerebrospinal, synovial, pleural, peritoneal, pericardial, and amniotic fluids, semen and vaginal secretions).

Barrier protection should be used with ALL tissues.

The type of barrier protection used should be appropriate for the type of procedures being performed and the type of exposure anticipated. Examples of barrier protection include disposable lab coats, gloves, and eye and face protection.

2. **Gloves** are to be worn when there is potential for hand or skin contact with blood, other potentially infectious material, or items and surfaces contaminated with these materials.
3. Wear **face protection** (face shield) during procedures that are likely to generate droplets of blood or body fluid to prevent exposure to mucous membranes of the mouth, nose and eyes.
4. Wear **protective body clothing** (disposable laboratory coats) when there is a potential for splashing of blood or body fluids.
5. **Wash hands or other skin surfaces** thoroughly and immediately if contaminated with blood, body fluids containing visible blood, or other body fluids to which universal precautions apply.
6. **Wash hands immediately** after gloves are removed.
7. Used needles, disposable syringes, scalpel blades, pipettes, and other **sharp items are to be placed in puncture resistant containers** marked with a biohazard symbol for disposal.

Please contact Health Care Services if you have any questions or concerns.

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