

3.4 UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS POLICY

Overview

Universal Precautions refer to safety measures used to protect people when handling blood or body fluids from others. These practices are designed to prevent the spread of infectious germs and safeguard everyone's health.

Most infections (such as HIV, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C) often show no obvious symptoms. For safety, all blood and body fluids should be treated as potentially infectious, regardless of the person's known medical history. Hepatitis B (HBV), Hepatitis C (HCV), and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) are the most commonly transmitted bloodborne diseases. These viruses can spread through contact with infected blood and certain body fluids, such as semen and vaginal secretions, but fluids like saliva, sweat, tears, urine, vomit and mucus are generally not considered infectious unless visibly contaminated with blood. Transmission can occur when infected fluids enter the body through broken skin such as open wounds or punctures or through mucous membranes of the eyes, nose, or mouth.

To reduce risk, all blood and potentially infectious materials should be handled with Universal Precautions, treating every person's bodily fluids as potentially hazardous.

Policy

BACI supports the use of Universal Precautions as a method to provide simple and basic precautions against the transmission of disease. To assure a universal practice, BACI directs all persons to follow the Universal Precautions Procedures.

BACI will:

- Maintain current Universal Precautions Procedures.
- Provide an orientation with regard to Universal Precautions Procedures to all employees and volunteers who are required to handle, or may be exposed to, blood and body fluids. Orientation will be provided by the designated supervisor/coordinator or manager.
- Provide supplies and equipment needed to practice universal precautions. Disposable gloves and barrier masks will be provided to all employees and volunteers whose duties may involve contact with blood and body fluids.
- Comply with WorksafeBC regulations regarding communicable diseases.
- Comply with Health Authority regulations, as applicable.

Employees are expected to:

- Attend and participate in orientations provided on Universal Precautions.
- Follow the practices outlined in the Universal Precautions Procedures.

Linking Policies

- 1.8 Code of Ethics
- 1.11 Risk Management Policy
- 3.1 General Health & Safety Policy
- 3.3 First Aid Policy
- 3.17 Risk Assessment Policy