

Jason Mechanical Corp

Tool Box Safety Talk

BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS

Bloodborne pathogens are not something you generally think about when on a job site. However, you should be aware of them because they exist in all environments. Designated First Aid Providers can protect themselves through certified CPR training and following the provisions of an Exposure Control Plan to prevent the introduction of bloodborne pathogens into their system by exposure to skin, eye, mucous membrane or contact caused by piercing mucous membranes or the skin barrier through bites, cuts, needle sticks, or abrasions with blood or other potentially infectious material. Actually, if our job sites are reasonably close to a medical facility, designated First Aid Providers are not required.

Exactly what are bloodborne pathogens? They are pathogenic microorganisms that are present in human blood and can cause disease in humans. These include, but are not limited to, hepatitis B virus (HBV) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Other potentially infectious materials include: human body fluids; unfixed tissue or organ from a human (living or dead); and HIV-containing cell or tissue cultures, organ cultures, and HIV or HBV-containing culture medium or other solutions. OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.1030 deals specifically with the reduction of these hazards through awareness, training, engineering controls, work practice controls, and personal protective equipment requirements. Further, all employees exposed by occupation to bloodborne pathogens must be given the opportunity to be vaccinated with the hepatitis B vaccine at no charge to themselves. Should one decide not to have this vaccination, the declination must be in writing and this declination may be revoked by the employee at any time (provided he/she remains at exposure risk).

If exposure occurs, specific procedures are detailed concerning documentation of the incident, the providing of HBV and HIV testing, counseling and safe and effective postexposure prophylaxis.

All employees that deal with bloodborne pathogens in their assigned job must understand and use Universal Precautions which basically means that all human blood and certain body fluids are treated as if they are known to be infectious for bloodborne pathogens.

Certain procedures apply in all situations. These include good housekeeping, wearing of personal protective equipment, proper disposal of waste, the immediate cleaning up of spills, personal hygiene, and the prohibition of eating, drinking, smoking, applying

cosmetics and handling contact lenses in work areas where there is a likelihood of occupational exposure.

One should be aware of the limitations of personal protective equipment. For example, rubber gloves will not protect against the dangers of a needle prick.

Do not expose yourself to bloodborne pathogens -- let the emergency medical responders, who have had appropriate training, deal with them.

Safety Concerns:
