

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

---

**PURPOSE:** To provide Department personnel with communicable disease information and current safety procedures which will assist in minimizing potential exposure, while increasing knowledge of the nature and potential risks of communicable diseases. It shall also be the policy of this Department that every person receives appropriate service and emergency care regardless of their physical condition.

**POLICY:** To establish procedures for the proper investigation of incidents that involve persons who have, or are suspected of having a communicable disease. The procedures shall establish:

- A. Guidelines to reduce the risk of law enforcement or Emergency Service Officers of contracting a communicable disease during the performance of official duties;
- B. Procedures to be followed when an officer has a line of duty exposure to a communicable disease; and
- C. The ability to assure the confidentiality and the prevention of discrimination against victims of communicable diseases.

**DEFINITIONS:**

- I. **BODY FLUIDS:** Liquid secretion including, but not limited to, blood, semen and vaginal or other secretions that might contain these fluids, such as saliva, vomit, urine or feces.
- II. **COMMUNICABLE DISEASE:** Those infectious illnesses that are transmitted through direct or indirect (including airborne) contact with an infected individual, including but not limited to the body fluids of the infected individual.

**PROCEDURES:**

- I. **COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION**
  - A. In order to minimize potential exposure to communicable diseases, officers must assume that all persons are potential carriers of a communicable disease.
  - B. Officers must cover all open cuts and abrasions with waterproof bandages prior to reporting for duty.
  - C. Disposable double latex gloves shall be worn when handling any person, clothing or equipment with body fluids on them, or when the officer anticipates becoming involved in assaultive behavior through which the officer may potentially become exposed to blood or body fluids containing blood.
    - 1. Gloves should not be reused, and a new pair should be put on before handling a different person or touching uncontaminated items;
    - 2. When leather or cotton gloves are worn for crime scene work, latex gloves can be worn underneath for added protection; and
    - 3. In appropriate circumstances, more than one (1) pair of latex gloves shall be worn to protect against exposure.
  - D. Mask, protective eye goggles and protective disposable coveralls shall be worn where body fluids may be splashed on the officer, or where airborne contamination of a communicable disease is anticipated.

- E. Plastic mouthpieces or other authorized barrier resuscitation devices shall be used whenever an officer performs CPR or mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.
- F. All sharp instruments such as knives, scalpels, and needles shall be handled with extraordinary care and should be considered to be contaminated items.
- G. Officers shall not smoke, eat, drink, or apply makeup around body fluid spills or when wearing protective gloves.
- H. Any evidence contaminated with body fluids shall first be air dried, then double bagged in plastic bags and marked to identify suspected or known communicable disease contamination.
  - 1. Department issued sealable evidence bags shall be utilized. Stapling of evidence bags should be avoided.

## II. TRANSPORTING AND CUSTODY

- A. When appropriate protective equipment is available, no officer shall refuse to interview, assist, arrest or otherwise physically handle any person who may have a communicable disease. Should an officer be involved in an incident where proper safety materials are not available, the officer shall immediately contact the supervisor and request assistance.
- B. Officers shall not put their fingers in or near the mouth of any conscious person. Officers utilizing protective gloves can, in life threatening situations, insert their finger into the mouth of an unconscious person to attempt to clear a blocked airway. This action should be performed in accordance with prescribed foreign body airway obstruction procedures.
- C. When possible, persons with body fluids on their body or clothing shall be transported in separate vehicles from other individuals.
- D. During a transfer of custody, officers shall discreetly notify support personnel that the suspect/victim has body fluids on the person or that the suspect/victim has said that he has a communicable disease. Care must be taken to ensure that the information is given only to those who have a need to know.
- E. When possible, suspects taken into custody with body fluids on their body or clothing, and not in need of medical attention shall be isolated from other persons until clean-up has been completed and a change of clothes has been provided.
- F. The shift supervisor on duty at the detention facility shall be immediately advised of the suspect's status.
- G. Officers shall document that a suspect taken into custody has body fluids on their person and has stated that he or she has a communicable disease.
- H. All officers dealing with persons who have blood or other body fluids on their body or clothing will be personally responsible for following precautionary procedures and using the protective materials provided.

## III. DECONTAMINATION

- A. Any skin surfaces that have had the slightest contact with body fluids shall be immediately and thoroughly washed with hot running water and soap for one (1) minute before rinsing with an antiseptic solution before drying.
  - 1. Alcohol, antiseptic solutions or novelettes may be used when soap and water are not available; and
  - 2. Disposable gloves should be removed inside out with the contaminated side not exposed. The hands and forearms should then be washed.
- B. Officers should remove clothing that has been contaminated with body fluids as soon as practical. Officers should cleanse any contacted skin area in the prescribed fashion (showering if necessary) prior to putting on clean clothing.