



Summary of OSHA's Bloodborne Pathogens Standard

The CompWest Difference

CompWest customers are assigned a dedicated loss control consultant to identify and address loss trends while serving as a safety resource.

California's standard can be found in Cal/OSHA's Title 8, Section 5193, Exposure Control Plan for Bloodborne Pathogens. While the standard was primarily aimed at hospitals, dental and medical offices, laboratories, nursing homes, law enforcement agencies, emergency responders, and funeral homes, anyone who can "reasonably expect to come in contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials" (OPIM) as a result of their job, is covered by the standard. OSHA's summary of the standard is below.

As defined in the standard, bloodborne pathogens are infectious microorganisms present in blood that can cause disease in humans. These pathogens include, but are not limited to, hepatitis B virus (HBV), hepatitis C virus (HCV), and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the virus that causes AIDS. Workers exposed to bloodborne pathogens are at risk for serious or life-threatening illnesses. Each employer having

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employee(s) with occupational exposure to blood, certain other body fluids, or other potentially infectious materials (OPIM), must have a written Exposure Control Plan (ECP) that eliminates or minimizes the potential for transmission of blood or other body fluid pathogen diseases from patient, or source to employee. In general the plan is as follows:

- **Establish a plan.** This is a written plan to eliminate or minimize exposure in the workplace. The plan must be updated annually.
- **Implement universal precautions.** This is a required concept of treating all human blood and OPIM as if known to be infectious for bloodborne pathogens.
- **Identify and use engineering controls.** This includes sharps disposal containers, self-sheathing needles, and safer medical devices.
- **Identify and ensure the use of work practice controls.** These are practices that reduce the possibility of exposure by changing the way a task is performed, such as appropriate practices for handling and disposing of contaminated sharps, handling specimens, handling laundry, and cleaning contaminated surfaces and items.
- **Provide personal protective equipment (PPE).** This may include such items as gloves, gowns, eye protection, masks and face shields.
- **Make hepatitis B vaccinations available to all workers with occupational exposure.** This vaccination must be offered after the worker has received the required bloodborne pathogens training and within 10 days of initial assignment to a job with occupational exposure.
- **Make post-exposure evaluation and follow-up available to any occupationally exposed worker who experiences an exposure incident.**
- **Use labels and signs to communicate hazards.** Warning labels must be affixed to containers of regulated waste or of contaminated sharps, or freezers or refrigerators containing blood or OPIM. Facilities may use red bags or red containers instead of labels.
- **Provide information and training to workers.** Training must be offered in above plan initially and at least annually, or when procedures or tasks are modified and that affect worker exposures. Records must be maintained for each employee.

CompWest Loss Control has available a sample template plan and related web-based training for you and your staff.

