

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for law enforcement officers in preventing the contraction of communicable diseases.

II. POLICY

It is the responsibility of the department to ensure that its members are able to perform their duties in a safe and effective manner. The safe performance of daily operations has recently become threatened by life-endangering communicable diseases. Therefore, it shall be the policy of this department to continuously provide employees with up-to-date safety procedures and communicable disease information that will assist in minimizing potential exposure, while increasing understanding of the nature and potential risks of communicable diseases.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Body Fluids:** Liquid secretions including blood, semen and vaginal or other secretions that might contain these fluids such as saliva, vomit, urine or feces.
- B. **Communicable Disease:** Those infectious illnesses that are transmitted through contact with the body fluids of an infected individual.

IV. PROCEDURES

- A. **Communicable Disease Prevention**
 - 1. In order to minimize potential exposure to communicable diseases, officers should assume that all persons are potential carries of a communicable disease.
 - 2. Disposable gloves shall be worn when handling any persons, clothing or equipment with bodily fluids on them.
 - 3. Masks, protective eye wear and coveralls shall be worn where body fluids may be splashed on the floor.
 - 4. Plastic mouthpieces or other authorized barrier/resuscitation devices shall be used whenever an officer performs CPR.
 - 5. All sharp instruments such as knives, scalpels and needles shall be handled with extraordinary care, and should be considered contaminated items.

- a. Leather gloves shall be worn when searching for or handling sharp instruments .
 - b. Officers shall not place their hands in areas where sharp instruments might be hidden. An initial visual search of the area should be conducted, using a flashlight when necessary. The suspect may also be asked to remove such objects from his person.
 - c. Needles shall not be recapped, bent, broken, removed from a disposable syringe or otherwise manipulated by hand.
 - d. Needles shall be placed in a puncture-resistant container when being collected for evidentiary or disposal purposes.
6. Officers shall not smoke, eat, drink, or apply makeup around body fluids.
 7. Any evidence contaminated with body fluids will be dried, double bagged in plastic bags and marked to identify potential or know communicable disease contamination.

B. Transport and Custody

1. Where appropriate protective equipment is available, no officer shall refuse to arrest or otherwise physically handle any person who may have a communicable disease.
2. Officers shall not put their fingers in or near any person's mouth.
3. Individuals with body fluids on their persons shall be transported in separate vehicles from other individuals. The individual may be required to wear a suitable protective covering if he/she is bleeding or otherwise emitting body fluids.
4. Officers have an obligation to notify relevant support personnel during a transfer of custody when the suspect has body fluids present on his person, or has stated that he has a communicable disease.
5. Suspects taken into custody with body fluids on their persons shall be directly placed in the designated holding area for processing. The holding area shall be posted with an "Isolated Area – Do Not Enter" sign.
6. Officers shall document on the appropriate arrest or incident form when a suspect taken into custody has body fluids on this person, or has stated that he has a communicable disease.

C. Disinfection

1. Any unprotected skin surfaces that come into contact with body fluids shall be immediately and thoroughly washed with hot running water and soap for 15 seconds before rinsing and drying.
 - a. Alcohol or antiseptic towelettes may be used where soap and water are unavailable.
 - b. Disposable gloves should be rinsed before removal. The hands and forearms should then be washed.
 - c. Hand lotion should be applied after disinfection to prevent chapping and to seal cracks and cuts in the skin.
 - d. All open cuts and abrasions shall be covered with waterproof bandages before reporting for duty.

2. Officers should remove clothing that has been contaminated with body fluids as soon as practical. Any contacted skin area should then be cleansed in the prescribed fashion. Contaminated clothing should be handled carefully and laundered in the normal fashion.
3. Disinfection procedures shall be initiated whenever body fluids are spilled, or an individual with body fluids on his person is transported in a Departmental vehicle.
 - a. A supervisor shall be notified and the vehicle shall be taken to the service center as soon as possible.
 - b. Affected vehicles shall be immediately designated by the posting of an "Infectious Disease Contamination" sign upon arrival at the service center and while awaiting disinfection.
 - c. Service personnel shall remove any excess body fluids from the vehicle with absorbent cloth, paying special attention to any cracks, crevices or seams that may be holding excess fluid.
 - d. The affected area should be disinfected using hot water and detergent or alcohol, and allowed to air dry.
 - e. All police vehicles taken to a service center for scheduled washing and lubrication will routinely be cleaned in the interior with an approved disinfectant.
4. Non-disposable equipment and areas upon which body fluids have been spilled shall be disinfected as follows:
 - a. Any excess of body fluids should first be wiped up with approved disposable absorbent materials.
 - b. A freshly prepared solution of one part bleach to 10 parts water or a fungicidal/micro bactericidal disinfectant shall be used to clean the area or equipment.
5. All disposable equipment, cleaning materials or evidence contaminated with body fluids shall be bagged and disposed of in compliance with state law provisions for disposal of biologically hazardous waste material.

D. Supplies

1. Supervisors are responsible for continuously maintaining and storing in a convenient location an adequate amount of communicable disease control supplies for their units.
2. Supervisors are responsible for dissemination of supplies for infectious disease control. Protective gloves, other first aid supplies and disinfecting materials will be made readily available at all times.
3. All departmental vehicles shall be continuously stocked with the following communicable disease control supplies:
 - a. Clean coveralls in appropriate sizes;
 - b. Disposable gloves and leather gloves;
 - c. Puncture-resistant containers and sealable plastic bags;
 - d. Barrier resuscitation equipment, goggles and masks;
 - e. Liquid germicidal cleaner;
 - f. Disposable towelettes (70% isopropyl alcohol);

- g. Waterproof bandages;
- h. Absorbent cleaning materials; and
- i. "Isolation Area – Do Not Enter" signs.

E. Line of Duty Exposures to Communicable Diseases

1. Any officer who has been bitten by a person, or who has had physical contact with body fluids of another person while in the line of duty shall be considered to have been exposed to a communicable disease.
2. A supervisor shall be contacted, and all appropriate duty injury and medical forms shall be completed by the supervisor.
3. Immediately after exposure, the officer shall be transported to the appropriate health care facility for clinical and serological testing for evidence of infection.
 - a. The department shall ensure continued testing of the officer for evidence of infection and provide psychological counseling as determined necessary by the health care official.
 - b. Unless disclosure to an appropriate department official is authorized by the officer or by state law, the officer's test results shall remain confidential.
4. Any person responsible for potentially exposing the officer to a communicable disease shall be encouraged to undergo testing to determine if the person has a communicable disease.
 - a. The person shall be provided a copy of the test results and guaranteed its confidentiality.
 - b. Criminal charges may be sought against any person who intentionally acts to expose an officer to a communicable disease.
5. Officers who test positive for a communicable disease may continue working as long as they maintain acceptable performance and do not pose a safety and health threat to themselves, the public, or members of the department.
 - a. The department shall make all decisions concerning the employee's work status solely on the medical opinions and advise of the department's health care officials.
 - b. The department may require an employee to be examined by department health care officials to determine if he is able to perform his duties without hazard to himself or others.
6. All personnel shall treat employees who have contracted a communicable disease fairly, courteously and with dignity.

F. Record Keeping

The department shall maintain written records of all incidents involving employees who have potentially been exposed to a communicable disease while acting in the line of duty. The records shall be stored in a secured area with limited access, and maintained in conformance with applicable privacy laws.

ORDERED and EXECUTED this 15th day of April, 2013

Christopher Workman
Chief of Police