

The "C-Change" Initiative:

1. Change behaviors.
2. Challenge ourselves to re-think how we work.
3. Certify the results on a daily basis.



Toolbox Talk

Week of 5/17/10

INFECTIOUS DISEASE & FIRST AID TREATMENT

We may all find it necessary, at some time in the future, to help a co-worker who has been seriously injured and is bleeding. It is natural to be most concerned with helping the injured person at this time, but you should also think about protecting yourself from infection. Many diseases, such as AIDS and Hepatitis, can be transmitted from saliva-to-blood, or from blood-to-blood contact. Individuals may have such a disease and not know it, because of the long incubation period. They may have contracted an infectious disease through blood transfusion or exposure to food that has been handled by an infected person. Don't add another route for infection-unprotected first aid assistance.

Always follow "universal precautions" when there is a potential for contacting another's body fluids. This term means that "all injured persons should be considered *as if* they are infected with a bloodborne pathogen when administering first aid or medical attention."

- One of the best ways to protect yourself when giving first aid is by wearing rubber or latex gloves. This not only protects you, but protects the injured person from additional risk of infection as well. Even small finger cuts or abrasions on your hands could provide entry for a virus or bacteria.
- All first aid kits should be stocked with rubber gloves that are packaged individually so they remain sanitary. Gloves should *never* be re-used.
- First aid kits should also be stocked with face masks and glasses. If there is a chance of blood splattering, cover your mucous membranes-mouth, nose and eyes-with a mask and goggles. A dust mask or respirator will do in a pinch.
- Mouth-to-mouth resuscitation offers another potential for exposure to infectious disease. You can protect yourself through the use of a disposable microshield or S-tube, as they are sometimes called, which should also be supplied in first aid kits. These plastic devices prevent saliva transfer and limit the potential for infection from a variety of infectious diseases.
- Blood-contaminated gloves, clothing, bandages and absorbent materials should be properly deposited in leakproof containers that are clearly marked with the red biohazard symbol.
- Wash hands and other exposed skin immediately and *thoroughly* with soap and warm water if you've been exposed to blood or body fluids. To be safe, you should also be tested for pathogens.

□ When bleeding occurs in the workplace, the area of the spill should be disinfected. A mild solution of water and household chlorine bleach (10-to-1) is an accepted method. Someone who touches a blood spill even hours later could be subject to infection if disinfectant isn't used.

Your workplace may have a "Designated First Responder," who is well trained in providing first aid and avoiding exposure to infectious diseases. But you too could be on the spot when a co-worker is injured and needs immediate help. Follow "universal precautions" and remind others to do so as well. With hard-to-combat infectious diseases on the rise, take no chances!