



Training Bulletin

Los Angeles Port Police

Thomas E. Gazsi, Chief of Police

Pathogens

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Training Bulletin is to review how pathogens can be transmitted and how we can prevent their spread. (Title 8 CCR § 5193, requires this training annually)

INTRODUCTION:

Peace officers, Security officers, and others, must take appropriate precautions at all times when in direct contact with blood, bodily fluids, or other potential infectious materials.

Pathogens - Infection and disease are caused by **pathogens** that are spread through the air or by contact with another person's blood or bodily fluids.

Bacteria are microscopic organisms that can live in water, soil, organic material, or within the bodies of plants, animals, and humans. The human body contains both beneficial and harmful bacteria. Only when a bacterium is harmful would it be considered a pathogen.

A **virus** is a submicroscopic agent capable of infecting living cells. Once inside the cells of plants, animals, or humans, viruses can reproduce and cause illnesses or diseases.

Transfer of Pathogens - There are two primary means by which pathogens can be transferred from one human being to another:

- **Airborne pathogens** are spread by tiny droplets sprayed during breathing, coughing, or sneezing. Airborne pathogens can be absorbed through the mucous membranes (e.g., eyes, mouth) or when contaminated particles are inhaled.
- **Blood-borne pathogens** may be spread when the blood or other body fluids (e.g., semen, phlegm, mucus, etc.) of one person come into contact with an **open wound** or sore of another.

CHAIN OF TRANSMISSION:

Chain of transmission is how pathogens are spread, such as:

- Infectious agents (bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites);
- Reservoir/ source;
- Portal of exit;
- Means of transmission;
- Portal of entry; and,
- Susceptible host.

EXPOSURE:

Because of the nature of their occupation, peace officers and security personnel are at a high risk of being exposed to both airborne and blood-borne pathogens.

NOTE: Exposure does not necessarily mean an individual will contract the illness.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT:

By using personal protective equipment (PPE), peace officers using body substance isolation (BSI) can break the chain of transmission and prevent possible exposure and infection. For equipment to be effective, it must be used and cared for properly.

PPE	Examples	Additional Information
Protective Gloves	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vinyl• Latex• Other synthetic materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For single use only• Should be:<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Put on before any contact with the victim;-changed between victims; and,-disposed of properly. <p>NOTE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leather gloves may not be an effective barrier to prevent contamination; and,• Some individuals have a severe allergy to latex
Eye Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protective glasses• Goggles• Clip-on side protectors• Face shields	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Used to prevent splashing, splattering, or spraying of a victim's body fluids into a person's eyes;• Should provide protection from both the front and the sides; and,• Must be cleaned and sanitized after exposure or disposed of properly.

PPE	Examples	Additional Information
Masks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surgical-type masks • Approved particulate masks • Face shields • Particulate air respirators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used to prevent splashing, splattering, or spraying of a victim's bodily fluids into a person's nose or mouth; • Only specific masks and respirators will filter airborne pathogens; • Disposable surgical-type masks; • Reusable masks, shields, and respirators should be cleaned and sanitized after exposure or contamination; and, • N95 masks.
Gowns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disposable gowns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used to protect clothing and bare skin from spilled or splashed fluids; and, • Should be used only once and disposed of properly.
Ventilation Devices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portable pocket masks, one-way valve, and filters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contain valves to control direction of airflow and filters to reduce chances of contamination; and, • Used when applying cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

PPE	Examples
General Supplies and Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soap; • Specialized cleaning solutions and disinfectants. (e.g., bleach, germicide, etc.); • Prepackaged antimicrobial skin wipe towelettes; • Leak-proof disposable bags; • Biohazard disposable bags; and, • Puncture-resistant disposable containers (e.g., sharps containers, evidence containers, etc.).

PPE DISPOSAL:

Gloves, along with other single-use equipment, must be disposed of in an approved manner, according to manufacturer recommendations, after use or contamination. Disposal may include, but not be limited to, the use of:

- Biohazard bags;
- Sharps containers; and,
- Liquid-proof containers.

NOTE: Employees are responsible for being aware of and complying with Los Angeles Port Police policies and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidelines regarding the disposal of hazardous PPE and materials.

DECONTAMINATION CONSIDERATIONS:

When performing decontamination procedures, officers should follow the Los Angeles Port Police Bloodborne Pathogens Control Plan.

- Use proper cleaning procedures to disinfect and decontaminate any equipment that may have been exposed (e.g., vehicle steering wheel and interior, uniform, firearm, radio, etc.); and,
- Use extra caution when handling broken glass or sharp objects.

NOTE: A solution of 1 part bleach to 10 parts water can be used for disinfecting equipment. (OCOP has made this cleaning solution available throughout the Department.)

UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS:

Along with using PPE, there are several universal precautions that peace officers and other first responders in the EMS system should follow.

- **Treat all body fluids as if they are contaminated;**
- If possible, wash hands thoroughly with warm water and soap before and after each exposure, even when gloves are worn;
- Use hand sanitizer if hand washing is not available; and,
- Use **bandages** or other protective coverings when open cuts or sores exist.

PERSONAL PREVENTIVE MEASURES:

Employees should also be aware of personal preventive measures they may take to remain healthy and support their own immune systems. Staying in good physical condition can help break the chain of transmission of pathogens to which they may be exposed.

DOCUMENTATION TO EXPOSURE:

If an employee is exposed to an infectious pathogen (or even suspects exposure), no matter how slight, the officer should report the exposure verbally and in writing to his or her immediate supervisor as soon as possible.

NOTE: Employees should be aware of and comply with Los Angeles Port Police policies or guidelines regarding reporting exposure information, which must comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and OSHA regulations, and with specific actions to be taken.

CONCLUSION:

Employees, especially first responders, must recognize their responsibility to act in good faith and provide emergency medical services (EMS) to the best of their abilities and within the scope of their training. It is important to remember to take precautions when dealing with pathogens. (CCR Title 8, Sec. 5193, also requires this training annually).

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