

GENERAL ORDER IX

SUBJECT: COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

EFFECTIVE DATE: 03-09-92

REVIEW DATE: 01-13-12

Note: This rule or regulation is for internal use only, and does not enlarge an officer's civil or criminal liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety of care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violations of this directive, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department, and then only in a nonjudicial administrative setting.

I. Purpose

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

II. Policy

A. The police of West Plains, Missouri will safeguard, to the highest degree possible, Department employees and the public who come in contact with people who have, or are suspected of having, a communicable disease without sacrificing essential services to the community or individual citizens.

B. Employees are always responsible for treating people fairly and humanely. When handling or assisting persons with medical afflictions, employees bear the additional responsibility of being especially sensitive towards the person's condition and to treat the person with the same dignity reserved for all people with whom we have contact.

C. Information in records (e.g., test results) regarding an employee or arrestee with AIDS or other communicable disease is confidential. Access to such information is limited to only staff that have a legal need to know. Disclosures of any information except as required by law must not be made unless the expressed written consent of the person is obtained.

III. Definitions

A. Exposure: Any situation where the possibility exists that an individual or object may have been contaminated by body fluids of an individual suspected of being infected with a communicable disease.

B. Contamination: Physical contact with or transfer of body fluids from one individual suspected of being infected with a communicable disease to another. The transfer of such body fluids to an item of equipment such as a patrol vehicle or a detention cell shall also constitute exposure.

C. Body Fluids: Liquid secretions including blood, semen, and vaginal or other secretions that might contain these fluids such as saliva, vomit, urine, or feces.

D. Communicable Disease: Those infectious diseases that are transmitted through contact with the body fluids of an infected individual.

E. Infectious Disease: Includes all communicable diseases, as well as air-borne diseases such as tuberculosis.

F. Bloodborne Pathogenic Microorganisms that is present in human blood and can cause disease in humans. These pathogens include, but are not limited to, hepatitis B virus (HBV) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

IV. Procedures

A. Supplies

1. The supervisors shall ensure that adequate supplies are available for communicable disease control.

2. The supervisors will be responsible for the inventory of supplies for communicable disease control. He will also initiate re-ordering procedures before supplies become depleted.

3. Officers using supplies stored in police vehicles are responsible for reporting the use to the supervisors and replacing them.

4. Supplies will include:

a. Paper gowns.

b. Disposable gloves.

c. Puncture-resistant containers and sealable plastic bags.

d. Barrier resuscitation equipment, goggles, and masks.

- e. Liquid germicidal cleaner.
- f. Premoistened wipe pads (70% isopropyl alcohol)
- g. Waterproof bandages.
- h. Absorbent cleaning materials.
- i. "Isolated Area--Do Not Enter" signs.

B. Custody Procedures

1. Since medical history and/or examination cannot reliably identify all patients infected with HIV or other blood-borne pathogens, blood and body fluid precautions should be consistently used. This approach is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and is known as Universal Precautions.

2. Extreme caution is to be used during the search of homes, vehicles, and persons of suspected drug users. This will help prevent accidental skin punctures. Extreme caution must be used when reaching into areas that are not visible.

3. After the completion of the task or search where protected disposable gloves were used, they are to be removed with caution, placed in a plastic bag and securely sealed. Upon returning to the station, the officer shall place the sealed bag into a designated "Contaminated Item Receptacle".

4. Whenever it is necessary to transport a subject who has blood or bodily fluids present on his person or clothing, the supervisor shall be notified. Ambulances should be summoned when transport to a health care facility is necessary.

5. Subjects with blood or bodily fluids present on their person should be transported separately from other subjects. Officers will inform communications when a subject is transported alone.

6. Officers have an obligation to inform other support personnel (fire fighters, paramedics, sheriff deputies, detox personnel, etc.) whenever change or transfer of custody occurs and the subject has blood or bodily fluids present on his person, or if the subject has made a voluntary statement that he has a communicable disease.

7. Subjects taken into custody with blood or bodily fluids on their person shall be taken directly to and placed in a designated holding area for processing.

8. Officers are to indicate on the appropriate arrest forms when a subject is taken into custody makes a voluntary statement that he has a communicable disease. Notations will be made in accordance with paragraph I below.

9. Officers responding to a call where a complainant is alleging that he has been intentionally infected with a communicable disease shall summons a supervisor to respond to the scene.

C. Vehicle Maintenance

1. Disinfection procedures shall be initiated as soon as possible when a police vehicle requires maintenance after blood or other bodily fluid discharges.

2. A supervisor shall be notified and the vehicle will be taken or towed to the Public Works Garage as soon as possible.

3. Service personnel will implement disinfection procedures where appropriate.

4. Recommended disinfection procedures are as follows:

a. 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. Signs will be available at the service center.

b. Protective disposable gloves will be worn during all phases of disinfection. Officers are to make certain the gloves are not torn before they attempt to begin any phase of the disinfection process.

c. Service personnel shall remove any excess body fluids from the vehicle with an absorbent cloth, paying special attention to any cracks, crevices or seams that may be holding excess fluid.

d. A broad spectrum activity virucidal-germicidal solution, such as one part household bleach to ten parts water shall be prepared precisely according the prescribed standard. The effected area shall be cleansed with the virucidal-germicidal solution and allowed to air dry for ten minutes.

e. All disposable contaminated cleaning items shall be placed in plastic bags and placed in the designated "Contaminated Item Receptacle". Subsequent to the cleaning of the police vehicle, the "Infectious Disease Contamination" sign shall be placed in the same receptacle.

D. Cell Contamination

1. An "Isolated Area--Do Not Enter" sign shall be immediately posted on the cell.
2. The supervisor will be responsible for ensuring that the cell will be properly disinfected or sealed off.
3. Recommended disinfection procedure to be followed is the same as for vehicle disinfection procedures above.

E. Handling and Storage of Property and Evidence

1. Evidence containing suspected blood or other bodily fluids is to be handled with gloves. If the stain or sample is dry, it shall be placed in a paper bag. A property evidence tag, and evidence processing request, and a special label is to be affixed to the outside of the package. If the evidence consists of a syringe and needle, the needle portion is to be made safe by wrapping with tape so that the sharp point is covered and is blunt. The needle/syringe is to be placed in a proper container so that it can be seen by persons handling the evidence. The bag is to be tagged with an evidence tag, a processing request and a special label. It should be noted that if the needle/syringe is to be processed for latent fingerprints, the plastic bag may hinder with activity.

Remember, the safety of the police personnel is of utmost importance. Liquid samples either should be collected as liquid and stored in a bottle or, if located on clothing or similar materials, should be air dried and packaged as described above.

2. Always wash thoroughly with soap and water after handling any item suspected of being contaminated with blood or other bodily fluids. Wash even if you have worn gloves.
3. Persons working in areas for extended periods of time where blood or other bodily fluids have been shed (for example, crime-scene personnel working for protracted periods of time at homicide scenes) are to wear anti-contamination clothing such as suits, masks, boot covers, and gloves.
4. Personnel will adhere to a precise regimen when handling, processing, and storing potentially infectious disease-contaminated evidence/property.
5. Any clothing or evidence known to be contaminated with suspected Bio-Hazard, HIV, Hepatitis B, or other communicable diseases will be placed in a specified area and clearly labeled. The label will indicate, "Known HIV", "Possible Hepatitis B", etc.

6. All bloody clothing will be treated as if it is contaminated.
7. All bloody clothing or evidence, and sacks containing the clothing or evidence, will be handled with protective disposable gloves.
8. The supervisor will furnish protective disposable gloves to officers, detectives, or others handling bloody clothing while in the property section.
9. Any clothing known or suspected to be contaminated with any communicable disease, bloody or not, will be handled by supply section personnel only after those persons are wearing protective disposable gloves.
10. The evidence custodian shall wash his hands thoroughly with germicidal soap after handling any possibly contaminated clothing or evidence.
11. All property for disposal shall be kept in sealed color coded plastic bags and placed in the communicable disease receptacle in the property section. These items will be disposed of in accordance with established procedures for this type waste.

F. Property Contamination

1. When department issued or personal property is contaminated by blood or bodily fluids in the line of duty, officers will place the items in a sealed color coded plastic bag and deliver it to a supervisor for disposal. The officer will verbally inform a supervisor when possible that communicable disease contaminated items are transferred to their custody.
2. If supply section personnel determine that effective disinfection procedures are not practical, officers will leave the property with supply personnel for disposal and direct a letter through the chain of command to the Chief of Police for replacement of the item(s). The letter should include:
 - a. The circumstances by which the property became contaminated.
 - b. The name of the officer in the supply section who confirmed that disinfection procedures were not practical, and
 - c. Whether any person was charged with destruction of public or private property as a result of the contamination.

G. Line-of Duty Exposure to Communicable Disease or Contaminated Materials.

1. An exposure when an employee comes into contact with any blood or any body fluid shall be classified as either a “High Risk” or “Low Risk” exposure.
2. A “Low Risk” exposure is any exposure that does not meet the criteria for a “High Risk” exposure.
3. A ”High Risk” exposure is when blood or any body fluid that visibly contains blood comes in contact with:
 - a. Mucous membranes through the eyes, nose or mouth.
 - b. Skin that is no longer intact due to rashes, cuts or scrapes, infections and etc. (Intact skin involving a prolonged exposure to a large amount of bodily fluid is considered high risk by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.)
 - c. A wound which has penetrated through the outside layer of skin such as a bite, a contaminated needle or other sharp object.
 - d. Direct mouth to mouth contact.
4. In the case of any exposure, the employee shall:
 - a. Notify their supervisor immediately.
 - b. Immediately wash with soap and water, any part of their body, such as the hands, arms, face and etc., that may have been contaminated.
 - c. Remove contaminated clothing as soon as possible and launder the contaminated clothing separately with hot water and an appropriate detergent.
 - d. If body fluids make contact with eyes, immediately flush the eyes with water for 15 minutes.
5. In the case of a “High Risk” exposure, the employee shall also:
 - a. Attempt to obtain consent from the subject to be tested for communicable disease. If the subject refuses consent, such refusal shall be documented in the supervisor’s portion of the injury packet.
 - b. If the fact exist which would indicate that the source subject is positive for a communicable disease, such as statements made by the subject or a family member, and consent for testing is refused, a search warrant should be executed upon the individual to obtain a sample for testing.

c. Prepare an incident report detailing the extent of exposure.

d. Complete an Employee Report of Incident/Injury form.

e. The supervisor shall:

1. Notify the Safety Coordinator.

2. Complete a Supervisor's Investigation of Report

Incident/Injury form.

3. Direct the employee for an evaluation to the appropriate

medical facility:

a. The employee should be directed to Ozark Works if they can be tested within 12 hours of exposure.

b. The employee should be directed to the ER if they cannot be tested within twelve hours of exposure.

H. Record Keeping/Confidentially Of Information

Employees must balance the need of fellow members to have knowledge of individuals known to be infected with communicable diseases and the right to privacy of the infected person. Accordingly, the following procedures will be followed:

1. Under no circumstances shall information concerning communicable disease be broadcast in the clear on police radio nets. When there is reason to believe an officer is being dispatched to such a call, the dispatcher shall indicate a code that includes the letters "CD" (Charles-David) to alert the officer.

2. If the officer discovers such a situation subsequent to arrival at a scene, he shall likewise indicate to the dispatcher that he is involved with a "CD" (Charles-David) type call.

3. All employees are cautioned that any information concerning communicable disease is confidential. Public disclosure, under any circumstances, is strictly forbidden. Only the Chief of Police may release any such information.

AUTHORITY

- A. This policy is issued by the authority of the Chief of Police. Any policy additions, deviations or revisions shall be made only at the direction of the Chief of Police.

By Authority of:

Charles Brotherton, Jr., Chief of Police