

APPENDIX D - STANDARD PRECAUTIONS FOR INFECTION CONTROL

PROVIDING FIRST AID SAFELY

Before providing first aid to an injured or ill person, first aiders should assume they could be exposed to infection. First aiders should wash their hands with soap and water or apply alcohol-based hand rub before and after administering first aid. First aiders should also wear personal protective equipment to prevent contact with blood and body substances, including disposable gloves. Eye protection, a mask and protective clothing may also be necessary if splashes of blood or body substances are likely to occur.

You should establish procedures to avoid workers becoming ill and exposing others to illness when handling blood or body substances. Procedures could include:

- proper hand hygiene practices
- how to handle and dispose of sharps
- how to clean surfaces and reusable equipment
- how to manage spills and handle and clean soiled laundry
- how to handle and dispose of waste
- when to use personal protective equipment, for example, using resuscitation masks for cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

First aiders should be aware of what to do if they have accidental contact with blood or body substances, a sharps injury or contact with a person known to have a contagious illness. Any part of the body that comes in contact with blood or body substances should be washed with soap and water immediately. Prompt medical advice should be obtained.

All first aiders should be offered hepatitis B virus vaccination.

CONTAMINATED ITEMS

All items that are soiled with blood or body substances should be placed in plastic bags and tied securely. Waste disposal should comply with any state or local government requirements.

Sharps, including scissors and tweezers, that have become contaminated with blood or body substances should be disposed of in a rigid-walled, puncture-resistant sharps container by the person that used them. Guidance on the design, construction, colour and markings of sharps containers is provided in:

- AS 4031 – *Non-reusable containers for the collection of sharp medical items used in health care areas*
- AS/NZS 4261 – *Reusable containers for the collection of sharp items used in human and animal medical applications.*

If a first aider sustains a sharps injury or thinks they are at risk of infection from blood or bodily fluid contamination, they should seek prompt medical advice.

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CLEANING SPILLS

Cleaning should commence as soon as possible after an incident involving blood or body substances has occurred. First aiders should wear disposable gloves when cleaning spills and if splashes of blood or body substances may occur, additional protective equipment such as eye protection, plastic aprons and masks should be worn. Surfaces that have been contaminated with blood or body substances should be wiped with paper towelling and cleaned with warm soapy water. It is generally unnecessary to use sodium hypochlorite (chlorine bleach) for managing spills but it may be used in specific circumstances, for example if the surface is hard to clean.