

**UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
**POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

No. 320

Supersedes: NA

Effective: November 9, 2005

Page: NA Section: NA

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Dated: July 10, 2002

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**INFECTIOUS MATERIALS AND DISEASE CONTROL**

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**I. PURPOSE:** To establish guidelines for protecting employees from unnecessary risk of exposure to infectious diseases, and to establish procedures in the event that employees are exposed to or contract infectious diseases.

**II. POLICY:** It is the policy of the Upper Merion Township Police Department to provide procedures to assist employees in minimizing their risk of exposure, provide appropriate protective equipment, provide appropriate preventive education, and establish a medically prudent course of action should an exposure to infectious materials occur. Employees and persons served by the police department will not be discriminated against on the basis of an actual or suspected infection.

**III. DEFINITIONS:**

AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome): A bloodborne and sexually transmitted disease that impairs the body's immune system leaving it unable to fight off disease.

BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS: Refers to pathogenic microorganisms present in human blood that can cause disease in humans. The pathogens include, but are not limited to, Hepatitis B (HBV), Hepatitis C (HCV), Hepatitis A, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

EXPOSURE CONTROL PLAN: A written plan, available to all employees, which details the steps taken to eliminate or minimize exposure incidents, and identifies at risk tasks and assignments. This policy constitutes the Exposure Control Plan for the department.

HEPATITIS B (HBV): A viral infection that can result in liver damage, jaundice, cirrhosis, and sometimes cancer of the liver. The virus can be found in human blood, urine, semen, cerebrospinal fluid, vaginal secretions, and saliva.

**HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS (HIV):** The virus that causes AIDS.

**PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE):** Consists of specialized clothing or equipment worn or used by employees for protection against infection. PPE does not include uniforms or work clothes without special protective qualities.

**POTENTIALLY INFECTIOUS MATERIALS:** Includes the following human body fluids: blood, semen, vaginal secretions, cerebrospinal fluid (fluid from the spinal cord), synovial fluid (fluid in joints), pleural fluid (fluid that normally exists around the lining of the lungs), pericardial fluid (fluid around the heart), peritoneal fluid (fluid in the abdominal cavity), amniotic fluid (fluid in the birth sac), saliva, any body fluid that is visibly contaminated with blood, and all body fluids in situations where it is difficult or impossible to differentiate between body fluids.

**UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS:** An approach to infection control where all human blood and certain human body fluids are treated as if known to be infectious for HIV, HBV, and other bloodborne pathogens. Universal precautions are to be observed in all situations where there is a potential for contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials.

**IV. PROCEDURE:** This policy, also known as the “Exposure Control Plan”, shall provide the overall strategy for limiting exposure to the HIV, HBV, and other bloodborne pathogens, and responding to potential exposure incidents. The Upper Merion Township Police Department subscribes to the principles and practices for prevention of HIV and HBV exposure as detailed in universal precautions prescribed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the federal regulations of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Where otherwise not detailed in this policy, these practices and procedures shall guide department members.

**A. GENERAL DISEASE PREVENTION GUIDELINES:**

1. Universal precautions shall be taken by all members of the police department to prevent contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials. Police department members shall follow all precautionary measures outlined in this policy at all times.
2. All open cuts or abrasions shall be covered with waterproof bandages before reporting to duty.
3. Whenever any employee’s skin comes in contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials, the employee shall immediately, or as soon as possible, wash their hands and any other affected area with warm running water and soap, or flush mucous membranes with water. When soap and water is unavailable, germicidal disposable wipes may be used until soap and water becomes available.

4. Disposable gloves should be rinsed before removal and hands and forearms should then be washed.
5. Remove garments penetrated by blood or other potentially infected materials immediately, or as soon as possible, and clean the underlying skin with warm water and soap.
6. The employee should use extreme care when handling needles or other sharp objects and consider them to be contaminated items. Subsequent to a cautious frisk of outer garments, suspects should be required to empty their pockets or purses and to remove all sharp objects. Leather gloves or their protective equivalent shall be worn when searching persons or places where sharp objects are likely to be found. Where appropriate, searches of automobiles or other places should be conducted using a flashlight, mirror or other devices.
7. Eating, drinking, smoking, handling contact lenses, or applying cosmetics or lip balm is prohibited at scenes where the potential for exposure to bloodborne pathogens or other potentially infectious materials exists.

**B. CUSTODY AND TRANSPORTATION OF PRISONERS:**

1. Individuals with bodily fluids on their persons shall be transported in separate vehicles from other persons. Whenever possible, the individual should be transported in a vehicle with a plastic rear seat or the police van. The individual may be required to wear a suitable protective covering if the individual is bleeding or otherwise emitting bodily fluids.
2. Officers shall document on the appropriate report when a suspect taken into custody has bodily fluids on his/her person, or if the suspect has stated that he/she has an infectious disease. Persons taken into custody with bodily fluids on their persons shall be directly placed in a cell for decontamination. The prisoner shall remove affected items of clothing, which shall be placed in red biohazard bags and placed in the designated infectious materials container. Prisoners shall be issued disposable clothing when necessary. Prisoners shall be instructed to clean affected areas of their body with warm water and soap. The cell shall be posted with a biohazard sign and a note placed on the daily patrol log for disinfection.
3. Officers have the responsibility to notify relevant support personnel during a transfer of custody when the suspect has bodily fluids on his/her person, or when the suspect has stated that he/she has an infectious disease. Officers shall not house prisoners for other agencies who have bodily fluids on their persons, or who have stated that they have an infectious disease.

### C. EVIDENCE/PROPERTY

1. Property custodians shall adhere to all guidelines stipulated in this policy when handling, processing and storing potentially infectious disease contaminated evidence/property.
2. Any evidence or property that is potentially contaminated with infectious material, such as sharps, items containing bodily fluids, etc., shall be packaged in the appropriate hazardous materials container at the location where the evidence or property was recovered. Under no circumstances shall potentially contaminated evidence or property be transported to the station without having first been appropriately packaged and clearly marked. Upon return to the station, the evidence or property shall be placed in the designated area or container.
3. Officers are responsible for checking their vehicle at the beginning of their shift to ensure that it contains a sufficient supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), sharps containers and red biohazard bags.
4. All evidence/property for disposal shall be placed in approved red plastic bags that are sealed, labeled and placed in the designated infectious materials container.

### D. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE):

1. The police department shall provide PPE to employees. This equipment shall not permit blood or other potentially infectious materials to pass through or reach the employee's clothing, skin, eyes, mouth, or mucous membranes under normal conditions when the PPE is worn. PPE supplied by the Department shall be of a disposable type and not laundered or reused.
2. PPE shall be available at the following locations:
  - a. All marked and unmarked police vehicles.
  - b. All work stations of employees who may be exposed to blood or other potentially infectious materials.
  - c. The prisoner processing area.
3. PPE shall consist of the following:
  - a. Disposable single use gloves
  - b. Eye Protection
  - c. Surgical and hepafilter masks
  - d. Sterile surgical gowns
  - e. Ambu- mask or other barrier resuscitation device
  - f. Germicidal disposable wipes
  - g. Sharps tubes and containers
  - h. Waterproof bandages

- i. Red plastic biohazard bags
4. PPE shall be worn by police department employees as follows:
  - a. Disposable gloves shall be worn whenever an employee can be reasonably expected to have contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials, regardless of whether such materials are wet or dry. Employees shall make sure that the gloves are not torn before using. Officers shall maintain disposable gloves in their personal possession at all times.
  - b. Masks and gowns shall be worn by police department members whenever splashes, spray, spatter or droplets of blood or other potentially infectious materials may be generated and eye, nose or mouth contamination can be reasonably expected.
  - c. Ambu-masks or other barrier resuscitation devices shall be used whenever an employee performs CPR or mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.
  - d. Police department employees shall use PPE under all appropriate circumstances unless the employee can demonstrate that in a specific instance its use would have prevented the effective delivery of health care or public safety services, or would have imposed an increased hazard to his/her safety or the safety of a co-worker. All such instances shall be reported to the immediate supervisor and shall be investigated and documented to determine if changes could be instituted to prevent similar occurrences in the future.
5. Employees using PPE shall replace that equipment as soon as possible. Supervisors shall insure that adequate supplies of PPE are on hand to immediately replace equipment used by employees.
6. All PPE, once used, shall be disposed of by the employee who used the equipment by placing it in a biohazard bag, and placing the biohazard bag in the designated infectious waste container.

E. HOUSEKEEPING:

1. All employees are responsible for the maintenance of a clean and sanitary workplace. Supervisors shall conduct periodic inspections of workplaces to insure that these conditions are maintained.
2. Employees operating Departmental vehicles within which potentially infectious materials are spilled shall immediately notify their supervisor of the spill. The supervisor will arrange for a thorough cleaning as soon as possible. Affected vehicles will be placed out of service and bear a biohazard sign while awaiting disinfection.

3. Contaminated laundry and PPE shall be placed in red biohazard bags at the location where it is used and shall not be sorted, rinsed or cleaned at that location.
4. Contaminated laundry and PPE shall be placed in red biohazard bags at the location where it is used, and shall not be sorted, rinsed or cleaned at that location. Contaminated laundry shall include uniforms and clothing items worn by employees while on duty, whether supplied by the police department or personally owned, as well as clothing and bedding issued to prisoners, which have been exposed to blood or other potentially infectious material. An employee's contaminated laundry shall be disposed of properly and replaced at the police department's expense. In no case shall an employee launder any contaminated clothing items at their home, or at a commercial laundromat or cleaners.
5. Employees shall dispose of contaminated items that are no longer usable by placing them in a designated infectious waste container. These containers shall bear the required biohazard label, and shall be constructed as to be closable and leakproof.
6. Employees are responsible for reporting any equipment or work areas contaminated with blood or other potentially infectious materials. All equipment and work surfaces must be cleaned and decontaminated after contact with blood and other potentially infectious materials using a solution of one part chlorine bleach to ten parts water. All cleaning items shall be placed in red biohazard bags and disposed of in the designated infectious waste container. If an area that is contaminated cannot be cleaned and decontaminated immediately, it will be cordoned off and marked with a biohazard sign until cleaned.
7. Contaminated needles and sharps shall be disposed of in puncture resistant, leakproof, biohazard labeled containers. Employees shall not attempt to recap, shear, or break any needles or sharps.
8. Disposal of all regulated waste shall be in accordance with applicable regulations, and shall be performed by a vendor approved by the Chief of Police at a licensed disposal facility.
9. An outside contractor shall be used to perform biohazard clean up at certain scenes that have been produced as a result of employee actions. Command approval is required to initiate this process.

F. VACCINATIONS AND POST-EXPOSURE FOLLOW-UP:

1. All employees of the police department who have been determined to be at risk for occupational exposure to the hepatitis B virus (HBV) shall be provided with the opportunity to take the HBV vaccination series at no cost within 10 working days of assignment to an occupationally exposed duty.

2. The vaccination shall be provided if desired, but only after the employee has received required departmental training, has not previously received the vaccination series, and only if not contraindicated for medical reasons.
3. Any employee who declines to be vaccinated shall submit a written memo to the Chief of Police. If an employee initially declines the HBV vaccination, but decides at a later date to accept the vaccination, the police department shall make the vaccination available at that time.
4. All employees shall immediately notify their supervisor of possible exposure to infectious materials and shall, as soon as practicable, document the possible exposure in the appropriate report. Any employee who has unprotected physical contact with blood or other bodily fluids of another person in the line of duty shall be considered to have been potentially exposed to infectious materials.
5. Once notified of a potential exposure to infectious materials, the employee's immediate supervisor shall ensure that the employee receives prompt and appropriate medical attention. The supervisor shall also complete a supervisor's report and submit it through the chain of command to the Chief of Police. The incident report should include the routes of exposure, the circumstances under which the exposure incident occurred, the identity of the source individual(s), and all post exposure actions taken.
6. Immediately after exposure, the employee shall proceed to an authorized medical provider for tests of evidence of infection and treatment of any injuries. The police department shall insure continued testing of the employee for evidence of infection and provide psychological counseling as determined by the health care official.
7. The employee shall receive a copy of the health care provider's written opinion within 15 days of the evaluation and information on any conditions resulting from the exposure that require further evaluation or treatment.
8. Unless disclosure to an appropriate Township official is authorized by the employee or by state law, the employee's medical evaluation, test results, and any follow-up treatment shall remain confidential.
9. Any person responsible for potentially exposing an employee of the police department to infectious materials shall be encouraged to undergo testing to determine if that person has an infectious disease. If that person is willing to undergo testing, have him/her complete and sign the "Authorization for Use and Disclosure of Protected Health Information" form. Results of the source individual's testing shall be made available to that person and the exposed employee, and the employee shall be informed of applicable state laws and regulations concerning the disclosure of the identity and infectious status of the source individual.

10. If the person responsible for potentially exposing an employee to infectious materials refuses to undergo testing to determine if that person has an infectious disease, a court order to compel blood testing of the source individual will be sought. The petition for the court order will be filed by the Township solicitor with the appropriate court as per the guidelines issued by the Montgomery County District Attorney's Office in the memorandum on "Defendants with AIDS Carrier Profile", dated July 28, 1993 (see attachment to this policy).
11. Employees who test positive for HBV or HIV may continue working as long as they maintain acceptable performance and do not pose a safety or health threat to themselves, the public or other employees. The Department may require an employee to be examined by a Department designated health care provider to determine if the employee is able to perform his/her duties without hazard to self or others. The Department shall make all decisions concerning the employee's work status solely on the medical opinions and advice of the Department's designated health care provider.

G. TRAINING:

1. All members of the police department performing duties likely to involve occupational exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials shall receive training concerning the risks and prevention of infectious and bloodborne diseases prior to their initial assignment. This training will include, but not be limited to:
  - a. Explanation of the police department's Exposure Control Plan as outlined in this policy.
  - b. Explanation of the modes of transmission of bloodborne pathogens.
  - c. General explanation of the symptoms of bloodborne diseases.
  - d. Explanation of the tasks and other activities that may involve exposure to blood and other potentially infectious materials.
  - e. Explanation of the use and limitations of methods that will prevent or reduce exposure including work practices and PPE.
  - f. Provide information on the proper use, removal, handling, decontamination, and disposal of PPE.
  - g. Explanation of the HBV vaccine, including information on its efficacy, safety, method of administration, the benefits of being vaccinated, and that the vaccine will be offered at no cost to the employee.



- h. Explanation of the procedure to follow if an exposure incident occurs, including the method of reporting the incident and the medical follow-up that will be made available.
- 2. All affected employees shall receive annual refresher training and additional training whenever job tasks or procedures are modified in a manner that may alter their risk of exposure.

H. RECORDKEEPING:

- 1. The police department shall maintain a record for each employee detailing incidents of occupational exposure, including information on vaccination status, the results of examinations and tests, health care providers' written opinions, and any other relevant information. These records shall be retained by the police department in secure storage for the duration of the member's employment plus 30 years, and shall not be disclosed or reported without the express written consent of the employee.
- 2. The police department shall maintain records on the training of each employee to include the dates and contents of training sessions, the names and qualifications of the persons conducting the training, and the names and job titles of all employees attending the training sessions. These records shall be maintained for a period of three years from the date of the training.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

TO BE REVIEWED: ANNUALLY

DISTRIBUTION: All Police Officers  
All Civilian Police Employees  
Township Manager  
File