

Why is it important to reduce workplace bloodborne pathogen exposures?

Section 5(a)(1) of the OSHA Standard clearly states it is the employer's responsibility to eliminate all workplace hazards. In addition, transmission of BBPs remains a critical occupational health issue. There are high numbers of related pharmacy costs estimated to be:

- \$800 - \$6,000 each: Initial Treatment of Needlesticks (1)
- \$25,000+ Initial cost of medications for Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) (2)
- \$13,260 Potential OSHA fines per violation (3)

REF: 1. AOHP, 2014 | 2. HealthDay, 11/6/18 | 3. OSHA, 2018

Who is at high risk?

Healthcare professionals at the highest risk for needlestick injuries are surgeons, emergency room workers, laboratory room professionals, and nurses. But keep in mind that nearly 25% of all exposures occur to non-users of devices.

- Example: Environmental services workers – who, in the course of their cleaning duties, encounter a used needle which has not been properly disposed of.

Why do exposures happen?

In most cases, needlestick injuries occur chiefly because of unsafe practices and gross negligence on the part of the healthcare workers.

Are exposure incidents preventable?

The reality is that most needlestick injuries are preventable by following established procedures.

Three most common routes of exposure:

- Needlesticks
- Cuts from contaminated sharps
- Blood and body fluid splash, splatters

What can my company do?

Train your employees about bloodborne pathogens, safe work practices, and the use of safety devices and personal protective equipment. Create an exposure control plan.

Clients might consider utilizing the five recommendations below:

1. Form a sharps injury prevention team
2. Identify priorities
3. Identify and screen safer medical devices
4. Evaluate safer medical device(s)
5. Implement and monitor the use of the new safer medical device

See the following link for more information: [OSHA Bloodborne pathogens standard](#)