1.0 PURPOSE

- This policy addresses infectious diseases transmissible by direct or in-direct contact with an affected patient/resident/client, visitor, or worker.

- The purpose of managing occupational exposure to communicable diseases is to mitigate the risk of infection and transmission by pre-exposure and on-going education, training, and baseline health assessment, review and updates; staff influenza vaccination program; and by investigating all clinically identified and laboratory reports of a communicable disease as soon as possible as per BC Occupational Health and Safety (BC OHS) Regulations Part 6 – Biological Agents, Sections 6.33 – 6.40 the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) Communicable Disease Control Manual, Chapter 1: Communicable Disease Control, Chapter 2, Part 2: Immunization of Special Populations - Health Care Workers, Chapter 4: Tuberculosis; and the Interior Health (IH) Tuberculosis Protocols Toolkit. These guidelines align with the IH Biological Exposure Control Plan.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERM</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biological Agent</td>
<td>An organism, including a bloodborne pathogen, which is known or reasonably believed to be capable of causing disease in humans. The materials are classified as Risk Group 2, 3 or 4, by the Public Health Agency of Canada.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloodborne Pathogen</td>
<td>Pathogens (e.g. Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, or HIV) that can be transmitted from one person to another via blood and body fluids. The risk of transmission varies depending on the pathogen and the type of body fluid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicable Disease</td>
<td>An infectious disease transmissible from person to person via direct contact with an individual or their body fluids or by indirect means via a vector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>A worker employed directly by IH. Includes union, excluded, and employed student nurses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immunization</td>
<td>The safe and appropriate administration of a vaccine by licensed professionals to stimulate the body's own immune system to protect the individual against communicable diseases in the event of an exposure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-IH Employed Worker</td>
<td>A health-care worker not employed by IH but who provides patient care or works in institutions that provide patient care on behalf of IH (e.g. contract physicians, students, volunteers, and contractors).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AV0900 - MANAGEMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL EXPOSURE TO COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Exposure</td>
<td>Reasonably anticipated skin, eye, mucous membrane, or parenteral contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials that may result from the performance of a worker’s job duties. Occupational exposure does not include contracting common infections such as the cold or flu that are equally acquired outside the workplace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial Workplace Health Call Centre (PWHCC)</td>
<td>The provincial call centre that provides a variety of occupational health services to BC health authority employees and managers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>The possibility of an incident happening that impacts worker’s health and safety. The level of risk created by the incident is determined by analyzing the combined impact of likelihood (probability) and consequences (magnitude or severity) of exposure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening</td>
<td>Verbal history taking and/or examination of documented evidence and/or laboratory serological tests to determine current or previous infection and/or vaccination status regarding a communicable disease.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Management</td>
<td>Includes Senior Executive Team, Executive Directors, Directors, and Health Service Administrators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>Refers to all IH workers and non-direct workers (contract and non-contract), physicians, volunteers, students, and/or contractors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace Health and Safety (WH&amp;S)</td>
<td>The IH department that provides a variety of occupational health services to BC health authority employees, non-direct workers, and managers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.0 POLICY

3.1 Management of Occupational Exposure to Communicable Diseases Overview

IH recognizes that exposure to communicable diseases (CDs) in the workplace is an occupational hazard in healthcare and is committed to providing a safe environment for workers, clients, and the public. IH will support this commitment by developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating initiatives in support of this policy via the establishment and maintenance of prevention and management of occupational exposures to CDs, including bloodborne pathogens transmitted through a blood/body fluid exposure, as part of the IH Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Program.
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As outlined in the BC Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Regulation Items 6.33 – 6.40 (Biological Agents), this policy consists of the following elements:

1. Roles and Responsibilities
2. Education and Training
3. Baseline Health Assessment
4. Incident Reporting and Investigation
5. Incident Follow-up

When the risk of a communicable disease exposure (CDE) cannot be eliminated, any planned interventions/responses used by IH workers will prioritize the health and safety of workers.

3.2 Scope

- This policy applies to all workers.
- Worker immunity status is determined for specific diseases using current guidelines provided by the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) (Communicable Disease Manual, Chapter 2, Part 2: Immunization of Special Populations – Health Care Workers).
- Workers are required to report their immunization/immunity status to their employer/academic institution. Although vaccination is not mandatory for workers who are not immune to the preventable CDs, non-immune workers are strongly encouraged to receive vaccination in order to protect themselves as well as susceptible patients, residents, clients, and co-workers as outlined by BCCDC (HealthLinkBC File #66).
- In the event of an exposure/outbreak of a vaccine preventable CD, workers may be excluded from work for the period of communicability as outlined in the BCCDC Communicable Disease Manual (Chapter 1: Communicable Disease Control).

4.0 PROCEDURES

4.1 Roles and Responsibilities

In addition to the roles and responsibilities outlined in the Interior Health Biological Exposure Control Plan, the following is also required.

Senior Management:
- Support and actively promote IH’s commitment to the management of occupational exposures to communicable diseases.
- Ensure consideration is given to new preventive control measures in budget plans.
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- Ensure directors/managers/supervisory staff monitor the prevention strategies and take appropriate action as outlined by policies and procedures.
- Promote a culture of safety within the organization.
- Support front line management in the delivery of communicable disease exposure management.

Management and Supervisors:
- Be familiar with all aspects within this policy (Policy AV0900) and the Interior Health Biological Exposure Control Plan.
- Ensure that workers are provided with the information, instruction, training, supervision and PPE necessary to enable them to comply with Interior Health’s policies and procedures for preventing the spread of communicable diseases.

Employee:
- Be familiar with all aspects within this policy (Policy AV0900) and the Interior Health Biological Exposure Control Plan.
- Report their known immunization/immunity status to Workplace Health and Safety.
- Report communicable disease exposures incidents to the PWHCC for assessment, incident reporting and further direction.

Non-IH Employed Worker:
- Be familiar with all aspects within this policy (Policy AV0900) and the Interior Health Biological Exposure Control Plan.
- Ensure employer / subcontractor has current contact information.
- Be aware of their own communicable disease and vaccination status.
- Report communicable disease exposures to their employer or educational institution via their internal guidelines.

Infection Prevention and Control Program (IPAC):
- Be familiar with all aspects within this policy (Policy AV0900) and the Interior Health Biological Exposure Control Plan.
- Complete and submit the Communicable Disease Notification Tool to support interdisciplinary post exposure communication.

Joint Occupational Health and Safety (JOHS) Committee / Worker Representatives:
- Be familiar with all aspects within this policy (Policy AV0900) and the Interior Health Biological Exposure Control Plan.
- Review incident investigations and provide recommendations to mitigate site CD exposure trends.

Employee Relations:
- Be familiar with all aspects within this policy (Policy AV0900) and the Interior Health Biological Exposure Control Plan.
- Support front line management and first line of contact in the delivery of worker communicable disease exposure management.
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Workplace Health and Safety (WH&S):
- Support all aspects within this policy (Policy AV0900) and the Interior Health Biological Exposure Control Plan.
- Support communicable disease prevention strategies including immunization assessment and recommendations at time of and throughout employment.

Provincial Workplace Health Call Centre (PWHCC):
- Provide new employee assessment of immune status, recommendations for immunization and screening based on BCCDC guidelines for Healthcare Worker Immunization.
- Provide IH employees with communicable disease post-exposure management as outlined by the BCCDC (Communicable Disease Manual, Chapter 1: Communicable Disease Control) and BC OHS Regulations (Part 6 – Biological Agents, Section 6.33 – 6.40).

Office of the Medical Health Office (MHO) / Communicable Disease Unit (CD Unit):
- Be familiar with all aspects within this policy (Policy AV0900) and the Interior Health Biological Exposure Control Plan.
- Provides case specific direction for communicable disease exposure management.

4.2 Education and Training

- **Worker Education and Training**
  All workers must receive instruction in prevention strategies and behavior appropriate to the level of risk in their work. All workers must complete department/job specific WHS orientation to hazards and programs specific to their work. Screening, education, and vaccination are incorporated into the recruitment and orientation process for new employees.

  - New and returning employees are to receive orientation to communicable disease prevention, including immunization status information, influenza immunization, and the management of blood and body fluid exposures (New Employee Orientation: i-Learn 977).

  - Workers who are at risk for an occupational exposure to an airborne contaminated, are to be Respiratory Fit tested at the level to meet operational needs with the appropriate respirator as outlined in IH’s Respiratory Protection Program Policy (AV1900).

4.3 Baseline Health Assessment

- The purpose of baseline health assessment is to prevent the risk of exposure, infection, and transmission of communicable diseases (including bloodborne pathogens) in the workplace.

  - Workplace Health provides employees with baseline health assessment, recommendations, and referrals as applicable for immunization, serology, and TB
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screening as per BC OHS Regulation 6.39 and BCCDC (Communicable Disease Control Manual, Chapter 2, Part 2: Immunization of Special Populations - Health Care Workers).

- Workers are to participate in their organization’s health history reporting, screening, education, and immunization protocol:
  - new employee (hire date of < 3 months) to report to the PWHCC (1-866-922-9464) within two weeks of hire date (Monday – Friday: 0700 – 1700 hours except for statutory holidays).
  - established employee (hire date of > 3 months) to report to WHS (1-866-899-7999, Monday – Friday, 0800 – 1600 hours except for statutory holidays).
  - non-IH employed worker to report their baseline health information to their employer or educational institution via their internal guidelines.
  - students and faculty, as outlined in IH’s Student Placement Policy (AU1100) must ensure they comply with IH immunization policies and procedures, including having documented evidence of screening and vaccination histories consistent with Interior Health’s policy AV0900.

4.4 Incident Reporting and Investigation

- All employee CDE incidents are to be reported to the PWHCC (1-866-922-9464, Monday to Friday 0700 – 1700 except for statutory holidays).

- All non-IH employed worker CDE incidents are to be reported to their employer or educational institution via their internal guidelines.

4.5 Incident Follow-Up

As per IH Policy AV0100 – Occupational Health & Safety Program, Management is to ensure prompt and corrective action has been taken to eliminate unsafe conditions or activities and to conduct accident investigations for injuries which require medical attending or time loss from work.

5.0 RELATED POLICIES AND TOOLS

- AV0100 – OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY PROGRAM
- AU1100 – STUDENT PLACEMENTS
- AV1100 – EMPLOYEE INCIDENT REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION
- AV1350 – INFLUENZA PREVENTION POLICY
- AV1900 – RESPIRATORY PROTECTION PROGRAM POLICY
- IV0400 – GASTROINTESTINAL OUTBREAK GUIDELINES
- IV0500 – RESPIRATORY INFECTION (RI) OUTBREAK GUIDELINES
- VD0700 – COMMUNICABLE DISEASE OUTBREAK
- BIOLOGICAL EXPOSURE CONTROL PLAN
- COMMUNICABLE DISEASE NOTIFICATION TOOL
6.0 REFERENCES


2. BC Public Health Act Part 3- Preventing Disease and Other Health Hazards http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/08028_01/search/CIVIXDOCUMENT_ROOT.Stretch:((Public%20Health%20Act%20part%203)%20AND%20CIVIXDOCUMENT_ANCESTORS:statreg?8#part3


