

Bloodborne Pathogens

Bloodborne pathogens are microorganisms such as viruses or bacteria that are carried in blood and can cause disease in people. There are many different bloodborne pathogens including malaria, syphilis and brucellosis. Hepatitis B (HBV) and the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) are the two diseases specifically addressed by the OSHA Bloodborne Pathogen Standard.

In the United States, approximately 300,000 people are infected with HBV annually. Of these cases, a small percentage is fatal.

“Hepatitis” means “inflammation of the liver”, and, as the name implies, Hepatitis B is a virus that infects the liver. Hepatitis B is transmitted primarily through “blood to blood” contact.

AIDS, or acquired immune deficiency syndrome, is caused by a virus called the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Estimates on the number of people infected with HIV vary, some estimates suggest that an average of 35,000 people are infected every year in the US. It is believed that as of 2000, 920,000 persons were living with HIV/AIDS in the United States alone. These numbers could be higher, as many people who are infected with HIV may be completely unaware of it.

It is important to know which bloodborne pathogens (from humans or animals) you may be exposed to at work, especially in laboratories. For example, a practicing veterinarian might have potential for exposure to rabies; therefore it would be important to know specific information about rabies.

Upon completion of this one-hour course, students will have a basic understanding of bloodborne pathogens, modes of their transmission, methods of prevention, and other pertinent information as it relates pathogens.

OSHA Standard 1910.30

MIOSHA Standard Rule 325.7000 Part 554