

# BATON ROUGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

General Order  
No.267

Effective Date  
11-01-1994

Revised Date  
01-01-2001

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Subject: Communicable Diseases

Reviewed 9/1/16

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## POLICY

It is the responsibility of the department to ensure that its members are able to perform their duties in a safe and effective manner. The safe performance of daily operations has recently become threatened by life endangering communicable diseases. Therefore, it will be the policy of this department to continuously provide employees with up-to-date safety procedures and communicable disease information that will assist in minimizing potential exposure, while increasing their understanding on the nature and potential risks of communicable diseases.

## DEFINITIONS

**Body Fluids:** Liquid secretions including blood, semen and vaginal or other secretions that might contain these fluids such as saliva, vomit, urine, or feces.

**Communicable Disease:** Those infectious illnesses that are transmitted through contact with the body fluids of an infected individual.

**Sharps:** Any item capable of puncturing skin with minimal contact such as needles, knives, etc.

## PROCEDURES

### **I. Communicable Disease Prevention**

- A. The following engineering controls are used throughout the Department:
1. Hand washing facilities (or antiseptic hand cleaners and towels or antiseptic towelettes), that are readily accessible to all employees who have the potential for exposure.
  2. Containers for contaminated sharps having the following characteristics:
    - a. Puncture-resistant
    - b. Labeled with biohazard warning labels
    - c. Leak-proof
  3. Specimen/evidence containers which are:
    - a. Puncture-resistant
    - b. Labeled with biohazard warning labels
    - c. Leak-proof

### **II. Work Practice Controls**

- A. In addition to engineering controls, the Department uses a number of Work Practice Controls to help eliminate or minimize employee exposure to blood borne pathogens.

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- B. The person who is responsible for overseeing the implementation of these controls is the Health and Safety Officer and the Division/Unit commanders.
- C. The following Work Practice Controls are part of the Department's effort to comply with the Plan:
  - 1. Officers should not place their hands in areas where sharp instruments might be hidden. An initial visual search of the area should be conducted, using a flashlight when necessary. The suspect may also be asked to remove such objects from his person.
  - 2. Employees should wash their hands immediately, or as soon as possible, after removal of potentially contaminated gloves or other personal protection equipment.
  - 3. Following any contact of body areas with blood or any other potentially infectious materials, employees should wash their hands and any other exposed skin with soap and water as soon as possible. They should also flush exposed mucous membranes with water.
  - 4. Contaminated needles and other contaminated sharps are not bent or cut. They are placed in appropriate containers immediately or as soon as possible.
  - 5. Eating, drinking, smoking, applying cosmetics or lip balm and handling of contact lenses is prohibited in work areas where there is potential for exposure to blood borne pathogens.
  - 6. Food and drink is not kept or placed in refrigerators, freezers, on countertops, or in other storage areas where blood or other potentially infectious materials are present or handled.
  - 7. Specimens of blood or other materials (including blood soaked clothing) are placed in designated leak-proof containers, appropriately labeled, for handling and storage.
  - 8. If outside contamination of a primary specimen container occurs, that container is placed within a second container, appropriately labeled, for handling and storage.
  - 9. Police equipment that becomes contaminated should be decontaminated as soon as possible prior to returning to regular duties.

**Note:** Instant hand sanitizer is not a substitute for hand washing. Officers should wash their hands as soon as possible with soap and water, for at least 15 seconds, after a possible exposure.

- D. All officers will be trained in the appropriate Work Practice Controls.

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**III. Personal Protective Equipment**

- A. The Department provides the personal protective equipment that officers need to protect themselves against such exposure. This equipment includes, but is not limited to:
  - 1. Gloves
  - 2. Face shields/masks
  - 3. Protective gowns
  - 4. Hand towelettes
- B. The Exposure Control Officer, working with Divisional/Unit commanders and supervisors, is responsible for ensuring that all vehicles and work areas have appropriate protective equipment available to employees.
- C. All employees will be trained regarding the use of the appropriate personal protective equipment for their job assignment and tasks/procedures they perform. Additional training will be provided when necessary, if an employee takes on a new position or new job assignment. To determine whether additional training is needed, the employee's previous job assignment and tasks are compared to those for any new job that they undertake. Any needed training is provided by the department's Educational and Training Officer.
- D. To ensure that personal protective equipment is not contaminated and is in the appropriate condition to protect employees from potential exposure, the following practices are adhered to:
  - 1. All personal protective equipment is inspected periodically and repaired or replaced as needed to maintain its effectiveness.
  - 2. All single-use personal protective equipment is disposed of by depositing it in the biohazard waste boxes located in the districts. When full, the shift lieutenant will notify one of the Exposure Control Officers, who will then make the necessary arrangements to have it emptied.
- E. To ensure that the personal protective equipment is used as effectively as possible, employees will adhere to the following practices:
  - 1. Any garments penetrated by blood or other possible infectious materials are removed immediately, or as soon as is feasible.
  - 2. All potentially contaminated personal protective equipment is removed prior to leaving the work area or accident/incident site if possible, or as soon as is feasible.
  - 3. Gloves are worn in the following circumstances:
    - a. Whenever employees anticipate hand contact with potentially infectious materials.
    - b. When handling or touching contaminated items or surfaces.

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4. Gloves are replaced as soon as practical after contamination or if they are torn, punctured or otherwise lose their ability to function as an "exposure barrier".
5. Masks and eye protection are used whenever splashes or sprays may generate droplets of infectious materials.
6. Protective clothing (such as gowns) is worn whenever potential exposure to the body is anticipated and is practical.

#### **IV. Transport and Custody**

- A. Suspects taken into custody with body fluids on their persons will not be placed in direct contact with other arrestees or officers.
- B. Individuals who have stated they have a communicable disease or who have body fluids on their person will be transported separately from other individuals.
- C. Officers will document on the arrestee information form when a suspect taken into custody has body fluids on his person, or has stated that he has a communicable disease.
- D. Officers must notify other officers or support personnel during a transfer of custody when a suspect has body fluids present on his person or has stated he has a communicable disease.
- E. Where appropriate protective equipment is available no officer will refuse to arrest or otherwise physically handle any person who may have a communicable disease.

#### **V. Line of Duty Exposures to Communicable Diseases**

- A. Any officer who has been bitten (and the skin broken), or who has had physical contact with body fluids of another person while in the line of duty may possibly be considered to have been exposed to a communicable disease.
- B. The officer will contact his supervisor, who will in turn notify a Health and Safety Officer. All appropriate duty injury and medical forms will be completed by the supervisor.
  1. The Department will ensure continued testing of the officer at Departmental expense for evidence of infection and provide psychological counseling, if indicated or requested by the officer.
  2. Unless disclosure to a Departmental official is authorized by the officer or by State law, the results of any testing will remain confidential.

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- C. Any person responsible for potentially exposing an officer to a communicable disease will be encouraged to undergo testing at the department's expense to determine if the person has a communicable disease.
  - 1. If the person refuses to undergo testing and the officer demonstrates sufficient probable cause, the court may issue an order compelling the individual to undergo testing.
  - 2. Officers seeking such an order will proceed as if requesting any other court order. The testing will be done at the Coroner's office or a departmentally approved medical facility designated by the Coroner.
  - 3. The individual will be given a copy of his test results and guaranteed its confidentiality.
  - 4. Any person who intentionally exposes another to a communicable disease may be criminally charged.
- D. Officers who test positive for a communicable disease may continue working as long as they maintain acceptable performance and do not pose a safety and health threat to themselves, the public or members of the department.
- E. The department will make all decisions concerning the employee's work status solely on the medical opinions and advice of the department's health care officials. The department may require an employee to be examined by department health care officials to determine if he is able to perform his duties without hazard to himself or others.
- F. All personnel will treat employees who have contracted a communicable disease fairly, courteously and with dignity.

### **VI. Housekeeping**

- A. Maintaining equipment and departmental facilities in a clean and sanitary condition is an important part of the Blood-borne Pathogens Compliance Program. To facilitate this, the department has implemented a written schedule for cleaning and decontamination of equipment and the appropriate areas of the facility.
- B. Using this schedule, the Department employs the following practices:
  - 1. All equipment and surfaces are cleaned and decontaminated after contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials:
    - a. Immediately (or as soon as possible) when surfaces are overtly contaminated.
    - b. After any spill of blood or infectious material.
  - 2. All trash containers, pails, bins, and other receptacles intended for use routinely are inspected, cleaned and decontaminated as soon as possible if visibly contaminated.

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3. Potentially contaminated broken glassware is picked up using mechanical means (such as dustpan and brush, etc.).
- C. The Health and Safety Officer is responsible for setting up the cleaning and decontamination schedule and is responsible for ensuring that it is carried out.
- D. The Department is also careful in handling regulated waste and evidence (including used bandages, disposed of personal protective equipment, sharps and other potentially infectious materials). The following procedures are used with all of these types of wastes:
  1. They will be "bagged" in containers that are:
    - a. Closeable.
    - b. Puncture-resistant if the evidence or discarded materials have the potential to penetrate the container.
    - c. Leak-proof if the potential for fluid spill or leakage exists.
    - d. Labeled with the appropriate biohazard warning label.
  2. Containers for this regulated waste are placed in appropriate locations in departmental vehicles and facilities within easy access of all employees.
  3. Waste containers are maintained upright, routinely inspected and replaced if necessary and not allowed to overfill.
  4. Contaminated clothing is handled as little as possible and is not rinsed in department facilities.
  5. Whenever employees move or dump containers of regulated waste from one area to another, the waste products are placed inside an appropriate secondary container if leakage is possible from the first container.
- E. Shift supervisors are responsible for ensuring that the above precautions are adhered to during their individual shifts.

### **VII. Record Keeping**

The department will maintain written records of all incidents involving employees who have potentially been exposed to a communicable disease while acting in the line of duty. The records will be stored in a secured area with limited access and maintained in conformance with applicable privacy laws.