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## Aids & Hepatitis B

### Safe Working Practices

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#### Guidance for Local Authority staff called to assist in a possible Aids or Hepatitis 'B' related accident or other occurrence

##### Introduction

1. Any one incident could involve Council staff in various tasks ranging from every day administration to the more gruesome and emotional role associated with work related to the supervision, recovery and disposal of victims, including cleaning up and disposal of blood and other body fluids. Such work may quite naturally raise questions in the mind about AIDS and other blood related conditions such as Hepatitis 'B'. Council employees may also be exposed to these conditions during their normal employment.

##### Background

2. There is a need for staff to be aware of the possible problems both real and imagined, related to tasks involving the disposal of blood and other body fluids.
3. AIDS is a medical condition as is HEPATITIS 'B'. Talk of either tends to generate a somewhat emotional response, sometimes based on ignorance, fear of a mixture of both. Staff should be aware that although AIDS (HIV) is transmissible it is NOT contagious. HEPATITIS 'B' is much more infectious than AIDS (HIV) and the control measures which prevent the spread of the former will be more than adequate to prevent the spread of the latter. The virus can be transmitted through blood to blood contact. That is, direct access to the bloodstream of another person. It is entirely sensible therefore to treat all blood as though it is infectious. Sound general infection control precautions should be adopted whenever blood is handled or encountered on an accident site.

##### Protective Measures

4. **Protective Clothing.** Whenever called upon to assist in a blood related accident staff must be properly clothed in suitable protective clothing. In the simple 'clean up' process plastic gloves and a plastic apron should be worn together with over boots. In the more complex outdoor environment a PVC one piece coverall and gauntlets or their equivalent will be required, together with over boots. In cases where industrial cleaning fluids are used, a full face mask should also be worn. Where a full mask is not available industrial 'clear glass' goggles and a gauze/mask covering the nose and mouth should be worn. Such equipment is necessary to prevent inhalation of toxic fumes and prevent droplets

from cleaning fluids splashing into the eyes, nose and mouth. The masks are not needed to prevent the spread of infection, only to protect staff from the toxic cleaning agents in use.

### **Disinfecting and Cleaning Technique**

5. The following procedure for use in closed premises will enable staff to safely deal with both the AIDS virus, HEPATITIS 'B' and a variety of bacterial, viral or parasitic conditions. The following equipment, normally available through CONTRACT SERVICES, Aspen Way, will be required:-
  - 5.1 A supply of cleaning materials, rags, paper towels etc.
  - 5.2 Carton of Sodium HYPOCHLORITE or a similar industrial bleach solution.
  - 5.3 Buckets.
  - 5.4 Scrubbing brushes.
  - 5.5 Mops.
  - 5.6 Clinical waste disposal bags (yellow in colour).
  - 5.7 Protective clothing:
    - Rubber gloves
    - Disposable gloves
    - Disposable face masks
    - Disposable aprons
    - Wellington boots
    - One piece PVC coveralls
    - Waterproof plasters
6. Spillage of blood or body fluids must be covered (paper towels) and left to soak in a mixture of hypochlorite solution for 30 minutes or so. The solution must be prepared according to the manufacturer's instructions, normally one part industrial bleach to 10 parts water.
7. Once disinfected, the area may be scrubbed clean and washed down. All used cleaning materials, brushes etc. must be placed in yellow clinical waste bags and disposed of in accordance with the special waste regulations.
8. Any bulky materials such as soiled mattresses etc., must be disposed of in compliance with the special waste regulations. Phone Contract Services ext. 2964 for further advice.
9. **General Precautions.** The following guidance must always be followed:-
  - 9.1 Always wear protective clothing including face protection.
  - 9.2 Personal cuts and abrasions must always be covered with waterproof plaster before donning protective clothing.
  - 9.3 Contaminated outer clothing must be discarded and disposed of using yellow clinical disposable bags.

- 9.4 There should normally be a Police presence in the event of an accident or other emergency. However should this not be the case, remember deceased persons are subject to H.M. Coroner's control. Items of personal clothing and effects, or parts of a body, must not be removed from the site unless under the specific direction and control of the Police.
- 9.5 In the event of major accident or disaster involving the clearance of extensive contaminated areas of highway or other ground, the industrial procedures are held at Contract Services ext. 2964 as above.
- 9.6 Remain aware that a solution of Sodium Hypochlorite or any other industrial bleach or cleaning fluid can in itself present a hazard because of its strong alkaline content. Serious personal injury may result unless sensible protective clothing and face masks are worn.

**Appendix 1**  
**EXTRACT FROM TORBAY CONTRACT SERVICES**  
**SAFETY PROCEDURE 21/89**

*(Precautions to be taken when called to incidents that require the removal of blood from the highway or other premises.)*

**Introduction**

There are occasions when this and other departments receive requests for assistance from the public services, i.e. the Police, Fire and Ambulance when road accidents and other incidents have occurred and which necessitates the removal of blood from the scene. This can be carried out quite safely and effectively by adhering to the procedures outlined in this paper.

**Procedure - Highway Incidents**

A considerable amount of water will be required. A gully emptying machine with a full tank of clean water will be necessary. High pressure cleaners or the high pressure sewer jetting machine must not be used.

On arrival at the scene a solution of Sodium Hypochlorite must be mixed according to the manufacturer's instructions (one part to ten parts of water) and the affected area should be swabbed with the solution and allowed to remain for a period of approximately 15 minutes.

At this time the gully machine can be used to flood the area with water which can be allowed to drain away. Any other debris, i.e. broken glass etc. can be swept up and collected for disposal at the TCS Depot. No other action will be required.

**Protective Clothing**

A PVC one piece coverall and gauntlets must be worn. In all cases where Sodium Hypochlorite is used a full face mask must be worn. High visibility jackets must also be worn when attending accidents on the highway.

**Procedure for Cleaning Closed Premises**

The procedure for cleaning the inside of a house or other building will be somewhat different because of the confined space and the necessity to use hand tools and other materials. The following will be required:-

- A supply of cleaning rags
- Carton of Sodium Hypochlorite
- Buckets
- Scrubbing Brushes
- Mops
- Clinical Waste collection of sacks (yellow)

The area to be cleaned should be swabbed with a solution of Sodium Hypochlorite and left to approximately 15 minutes before it can be cleaned with rags and brushes etc. All used cleaning rags and brushes etc., must be placed in the yellow clinical waste collection sacks and deposited in the clinical waste bulk refuse container situated at Aspen Way for transportation to the incinerator.

Any bulky materials such as mattresses etc. must be transported to Heathfield refuse site with prior approval by the Environmental Agency.

Protective clothing as outline above will be required.

**General Observations**

Before arrival at the scene any person who has sustained cuts or abrasions must cover these with a waterproof plaster.

It should be noted that where fatal accidents occur the body becomes the property of H.M. Coroner and items of clothing, contaminated or otherwise or any part of a body may not be removed from the scene by Local Authority staff unless under the direct supervision of the Police Officer in charge of the incident.