



**Policy:** Exposure Control Plan for Infectious Diseases  
**Effective:** October 22, 2013  
**Review:** Annual

#### **A. Purpose**

To protect Evergreen Nursing Services employees from occupational exposure to infectious disease and that it is done in a manner that complied with the BC Workers Compensation Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, and human rights legislation.

The exposure control plan covers all Evergreen Nursing Services employees, as it is reasonably anticipated that they may have harmful contact with infectious diseases as a result of performing their normal job duties.

#### **B. Policy Statement**

Evergreen Nursing Services would like to minimize or eliminate the health risks associated with the spread of infections and disease. Understanding that it is likely that our employees will come into contact with infectious diseases awareness risk and prevention measures is paramount to the protection of the health and safety of both our employees and clients.

#### **C. Rationale**

All Evergreen Nursing Services employees have the potential for occupational exposure to infectious disease.

Employees may have harmful contact with blood or OPIMs via:

- Percutaneous injury
- Mucous membrane contact or
- Non-intact skin contact

Employees may also be exposed to other infectious diseases like Tuberculosis which require precautions against airborne infections or the Norovirus which spreads through contact with contaminated surfaces.

It is reasonably anticipated that such contact may occur when employees are providing occupational first aid to clients.

## **D. Policy Scope**

This policy applies to all Evergreen Nursing Services employees (“Covered Individuals”) including full time permanent and casual employees. Some contractors may be required to comply with the Policy depending on their likelihood of interaction with patients.

“Place of Care” (the location of service delivery) policies may identify additional requirements and responsibilities regarding influenza vaccination and disease prevention. Evergreen Nursing Services staff are required to comply with all Place of Care policy regulations. Employees that choose not to comply with Place of Care policy regulations may be refused work by the Place of Care due to non-compliance.

## **E. Responsibilities**

To minimize and potentially eliminate the spread of infectious **diseases Evergreen Nursing Services will:**

- Conduct the risk identification and assessment of our employees potential occupational exposure to an infectious disease
- Implement safe work practices and provide written work procedures to eliminate or reduce our employees potential exposure to an infectious disease
- Provide our employees with appropriate personal protective equipment as requested (masks are available for pick up at the Administration Office)
- Ensure our employees are provided with education and training on preventing exposure to infectious diseases and the exposure control plan (per section 4, education and training)
- Ensure that all pertinent records are maintained
- Set up a check system to ensure that all employees who have had an exposure incident to blood or Other Potentially Infectious Materials (OPIMs) are medically evaluated, then seen by a physician for follow-up care if deemed necessary by the initial medical evaluation
- Ensure that accident investigations of employees’ exposure to an infectious disease are conducted and corrective actions are taken to prevent similar incidents from occurring
- Annually review the exposure control plan and update as necessary.

The **Director of Nursing with support from the Nursing Supervisor will:**

- Supervise employees with respect to the risk of exposure to infectious disease
- Ensure that employees are following safe work practices and written work procedures
- Ensure that employees wear appropriate personal protection equipment
- Ensure that employees receive education and training on preventing exposure to infectious disease and the exposure control plan initially, whenever the plan changes and every three years
- Ensure that the post-exposure health management procedure is followed for employees exposure incidents to blood or OPIMs

- To minimize and potentially eliminate the spread of infectious diseases to themselves and their patients/clients Evergreen Nursing Services Employees will:
- Follow safe work practices and written work procedures
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment
- Participate in education and training session
- Follow the post-exposure health management procedure in the event of an exposure incident to blood or OPIMs
- Participate in accident investigations of exposures to an infectious disease

## **F. Control Procedures**

Engineering and safe work practice controls are the preferred means to eliminate or minimize our employees' exposure to infectious disease at any worksite. If such controls are unavailable or impracticable, or do not completely eliminate exposure, employees will wear the appropriate personal protective equipment.

### ***a) Engineering Controls***

Although first aid kits and equipment contain only a few items that could break through the skin, employees must always watch out for other sharp objects that may be encountered and pose a risk of percutaneous injury (e.g. contaminated broken glass). Sharps disposal containers, if required are available upon request.

Pocket masks are available in the Administration Office for employees to use when in contact with infected patients or clients. These masks should not be shared or washed, and should be disposed of at the end of each day of use.

### ***b) Work practice controls and written work procedures***

As specified in the WorkSafe BC "Controlling Exposure: Protecting Workers from Infectious Disease" in the following sections "Controlling Exposure to Infectious Diseases" and Sample Safe Work Procedures" (pages 35-53), Evergreen Nursing Services Employees will:

- Follow the safe work procedures identified in pages 35-53
- Practice regular hand hygiene
- Use masks when required
- Follow safe sharps handling procedures, such as discarding any disposable, contaminated sharp items in sharps disposal containers as soon as possible
- Wear waterproof, disposable medical examination gloves when assessing and treating patients (if there is potential contact with patients' blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions, mucous membranes or non-intact skin), and when touching contaminated items or surfaces;
  - Also wear gloves if the employee has non-intact skin on their hands, after first covering the affected skin with a waterproof dressing

- Replace gloves as soon as practicable if they are torn, cut, punctured or leaking, and when they become contaminated or damaged such that their ability to function as a barrier is in question.
- Not wash or decontaminate disposable gloves for re-use
- Follow the procedures for glove removal and disposal (page 50)
- Follow the clean-up procedures for spills of blood and OPIMs that minimize splashing (page 52)
- Follow the post-exposure health management procedure, if they have an exposure incident to blood or OPIMS

***c) Personal Protective Equipment***

Waterproof, disposable medical examination gloves are available at the Administrative Office (3057 West 33<sup>rd</sup> Ave, Vancouver, washroom, first aid storage). They will be worn by Evergreen Nursing employees when it can be reasonably anticipated that the mucous membranes of their eyes, nose or mouth may be splashed or sprayed with blood or OPIMs.

***d) Housekeeping, Laundry and Waste***

All reusable medical and first aid equipment e.g. metal instruments, blood pressure cuffs etc. will be disinfected as soon as possible after contamination with blood or OPIMs, as well as on a routine basis, as specified by the manufacturer and in the manual/training guide.

Laundry soiled with blood or OPIMs will be treated as specified in the manual/training guides (page 53).

Sharps disposal containers will be securely closed and replaced when they are two-thirds full. Employees should notify the Nursing Supervisor to arrange for sharps container pick up.

First aid waste items (e.g. disposable gloves, pads and dressings) that are NOT dripping, saturated or grossly contaminated with blood or OPIMs are considered general waste. They will be discarded in waterproof waste bags for disposal at a landfill.

Items dripping saturated or grossly contaminated with blood or OPIMs are considered biomedical waste. They must be appropriately bagged and disposed of in accordance with provincial and local government regulatory agencies. Contact the Nursing Supervisor, and she/he will arrange for Sumas Remediation (604-990-8229) to collect the heavily soiled items.

## **G. Routine Practices (formerly known as Universal Precautions)**

Evergreen Nursing Employees will treat all blood and OPIMs as though they are known to be infected with blood borne pathogens and will follow infection control precautions and procedures as specified in the manual/training guides. This includes:

- Following precautions to prevent sharps injuries
- Using resuscitation devices
- Wearing personal protective equipment, and
- Following hand washing procedures.

## **H. Education and Training**

Evergreen Nursing employees will be provided with the WorkSafe BC “Controlling Exposure: Protecting Workers from Infectious Disease” manual pages 35-53 which includes information such as:

- An explanation of modes of disease transmission,
- An explanation of tasks and activities that involve exposure to infectious diseases
- Information on personal protective equipment including: appropriate selection use, removal, handling, cleaning, decontamination, inspection, maintenance, storage, disposal and limitations
- An explanation of post-exposure health management procedures to follow if an exposure incident to blood or OPIMs occurs.

Additional worksite-specific orientation, education and training will be provided by the service location and may include:

- Applicable sections of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation
- An explanation of this company’s exposure control plan regarding infectious disease and where to access it
- Control procedures specific to the worksite (e.g. location of sharps disposal containers, masks, wash facilities etc.)
- An explanation of engineering and safe work practice controls that will prevent or reduce exposure to infectious diseases including their use and limitations

## **I. Hygiene Facilities and Decontamination Procedures**

Hand washing facilities are available for Evergreen Nursing Services employees (e.g. restrooms, first aid room etc.). Hands will be washed as specified in the manual/training guide (page. 45).

Waterless hand towelettes are also provided for use if hand washing facilities are not immediately available. They can be picked up at the Administration Office prior to the shift start time. Evergreen employees will wash their hands with mild soap and running water as soon as possible after the use of the towelette.

## **J. Health Protection (Post-Exposure Health Management Procedure)**

For the initial management of an exposure incident to blood or OPIMs, the Evergreen Nursing employee will:

- Immediately self-administer first aid
- Report the incident to the Nursing Supervisor, then,
- Go to the nearest hospital emergency department within 2 hours of the incident for a medical evaluation (the reporting must not cause delay in seeking medical attention).

The follow-up management after an exposure incident to a blood or OPIMs will include:

- A referral to a physician for follow-up, if deemed necessary by the medical evaluation
- Appropriate documentation of the exposure incident, ( WorkSafe BC Claim Forms)
- An accident investigation to prevent similar exposure incidents to blood or OPIMs from occurring.

## **K. Recordkeeping**

Occupational exposure records will be kept that identify all Evergreen Nursing Services Employees as having potential occupational exposure to infectious disease in providing client services.

Exposure incident records (i.e. WorkSafe BC Claim forms, accident investigation reports etc.) will be kept for all exposure incidents.