BLOOD AND BODILY FLUID EXPOSURE GUIDANCE

GUIDANCE FOR MANAGERS AND EMPLOYEES

Practical guidance on what to do following potential exposure to blood or bodily fluids and the services available.



1. PURPOSE

This guidance outlines what to do following potential exposure to blood or bodily fluids, the support available and how to access the helpline.

This guidance is for Network Rail employees only. Contractors and rail alliances should have their own arrangements for managing exposures.

2. WHEN TO CALL THE HELPLINE

Contact the Sharps Injury Helpline immediately if you:

- Sustain an injury that breaks the skin from a needle or sharp object contaminated with bodily fluids.
- Get blood, saliva, or any bodily fluid on broken skin or mucous membranes (eyes/mouth).

3. IMMEDIATE ACTIONS TO TAKE

1. **Identify whether you may have been exposed to blood or bodily fluids.**
2. **Clean the affected area:**
   - For skin contact – wash with soap and water.
   - For eyes/mouth – rinse with clean water for at least 15 minutes.
3. **Report the incident:**
   - Notify your supervisor immediately.
   - Record the event through the incident reporting system.
4. **Call the Sharps Injury Helpline:**
   - Dial 0800 316 00 66 – Option 4.
5. **Follow the advice provided by the clinical team.**

4. USE OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

To minimise the risk of exposure:

- Always wear appropriate PPE when dealing with tasks involving potential contact with bodily fluids.
- Refer to the relevant Task Risk Control Sheet to ensure suitable PPE is used.

High-risk tasks include:

- Assisting injured individuals
- Cleaning up accidents or contaminated areas
- Handling waste or items possibly contaminated with fluids

SHARPS INJURY HELPLINE 0800 316 00 66 – Option 4

Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for immediate clinical advice.

Despite the name, the Sharps Injury Helpline provides advice for all blood and bodily fluid exposure incidents, not just sharps injuries.

The helpline is a clinical service supported by specialist occupational health practitioners who will provide expert advice and undertake a clinical risk assessment.

All callers will be clinically risk assessed by:

- Type of exposure
- Material that the employee has been exposed to
- Employee's Hepatitis B immune status
- If the source of the exposure is known to be high risk of carrying blood borne virus

IF YOU ARE ADVISED TO ATTEND A&E

- You will be given a letter to take with you.
- Please show this letter to the A&E staff.

Your call to the helpline and details of the incident will be recorded on your occupational health record to ensure you receive appropriate follow up and support.

5. KEY MESSAGES

- PPE significantly reduces your risk of exposure.
- If exposed, take immediate action and report the incident.
- The helpline provides fast, expert advice – use it.
- The risk of infection is low, but prompt response is critical.

WELLBEING SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE

Exposure incidents can be distressing. You can access confidential emotional wellbeing support through the Employee Assistance

Call EAP 24/7
0800 316 00 66 – Option 3