Providing first aid safely

Before providing first aid to an injured or ill person, first aid officers should assume they could be exposed to infection. First aid officers are to wash their hands with soap and water or apply alcohol-based hand rub before and after administering first aid. Personal protective equipment (e.g. disposable gloves) is to be worn to prevent contact with blood and body substances. Eye protection, a mask and protective clothing may also be necessary if splashes of blood or body substances are likely to occur. It is understood that this is not always possible in an emergency situation.

Standard precautions for infection control

To avoid becoming ill and/or exposing others to illness when handling blood or body substances, Standard Precautions are to be applied to all people, regardless of their infectious status. These work practices are based on the assumption that all blood and bodily substances are considered potentially infectious.

The following practices, which are detailed in the [Infection Control](http://ppr.det.qld.gov.au/corp/hr/workplace/Pages/Infection-Control.aspx) procedure and [Infection Control Guideline](https://education.qld.gov.au/initiativesstrategies/Documents/infection-control-guideline.pdf) should be known and followed:

* proper hand hygiene practices
* how to handle and dispose of sharps
* how to clean surfaces and reusable equipment
* how to manage spills of blood and bodily substances
* how to handle and clean soiled laundry
* how to handle and dispose of waste
* when to use personal protective equipment (e.g. using resuscitation masks for CPR)
* how to manage direct contact with blood or bodily substances (e.g. needle stick injury).

First aid officers should be offered vaccination for [Hepatitis A](http://conditions.health.qld.gov.au/HealthCondition/condition/14/217/72/Hepatitis-A) and [Hepatitis B](http://conditions.health.qld.gov.au/HealthCondition/condition/8/118/74/hepatitis-b) in accordance with the [Infection Control](http://ppr.det.qld.gov.au/corp/hr/workplace/Pages/Infection-Control.aspx) procedure. Costs associated with provision of this vaccination to be funded by the school/workplace.

Contaminated items

All items for disposal that are soiled with blood or body substances (e.g. bandages) should be placed in plastic bags and tied securely. Waste disposal should comply with any state or local government requirements. In general, placing soiled items in a plastic bag and tying securely, then placing that bag in a bin (e.g. curb side wheelie bin or industrial bin) that will be collected mechanically will assist to prevent contaminated items being handled accidentally. Local council information can be found at the [Local Government Association of Queensland site](http://www.bettercouncils.net.au/find-your-council).

Any sharps (e.g. syringes) that have become contaminated with blood or body substances should be disposed of in a rigid-walled, puncture-resistant sharps container by the person that used them. The materials, design, construction, colour and markings of sharps containers should comply with:

* *AS 4031-1992 – Non-reusable containers for the collection of sharp medical items used in health care areas*
* *AS/NZS 4261-1994 – Reusable containers for the collection of sharp items used in human and animal medical applications*.

# **Contact your local** [**council/shire**](https://www.lgaq.asn.au/) **to determining how and where to dispose of sharps containers when they are full.**

# **Refer to the fact sheet:** [**Safe Handling and Disposal of Needles and Syringes**](https://education.qld.gov.au/initiativesstrategies/Documents/safe-disposal-of-needles-and-syringes.pdf)**.**

# **If a first aid officer or any other person who sustains a sharps injury or thinks they are at risk of infection from blood or bodily fluid contamination should seek prompt medical advice.**

**If a needle stick injury or direct contact with blood/body substance occurs:**

* Stay calm and encourage the wound to bleed (gently squeeze).
* As soon as possible wash the area with running water and soap, apply antiseptic and cover the wound.
* Advise your supervisor and ensure you are medically assessed as soon as possible (doctor/hospital). They will manage blood testing, counselling and possible hepatitis B and tetanus vaccination and/or medication.
* Staff can access the [Employee Assistance Program](https://education.qld.gov.au/initiatives-and-strategies/health-and-wellbeing/workplaces/eap) (EAP) for confidential counselling or seek the assistance of another counselling service.
* Dispose of the needle/syringe safely. Testing of syringes is usually not conducted so there is no need to keep the syringe that caused the needle stick injury.

Cleaning spills

# In the event of a spill of blood or bodily substance, commence cleaning as soon as possible after the incident Exceptions include if the area has been isolated for an investigation.

# Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (e.g. disposable gloves, plastic apron, eye protection).

# Surfaces contaminated with blood or body substances are to be wiped with paper towelling and cleaned with warm soapy water. It is generally unnecessary to use sodium hypochlorite (chlorine bleach) for managing spills but it may be used in specific circumstances, for example if the surface is hard to clean.