



GENERAL ORDER

Loudoun County Sheriff's Office

Chapter: Personnel Management

Section: 310.8

Subject: Human Resources

Topic: Communicable Diseases

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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to establish the guidelines and procedures to be followed when a member of the agency is exposed to a [communicable disease](#) with the risk of a major illness or death, and to establish procedures for handling evidence or property that may be contaminated.

II. POLICY

The Loudoun County Sheriff's Office bears an obligation to the public and to its own personnel to increase awareness about risks, modes of transmission, and procedures for handling communicable diseases such as [hepatitis B and C](#), [tuberculosis](#), [Human Immunodeficiency Virus \(HIV\)](#) and [Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome \(AIDS\)](#), and AIDS-related infections. Although AIDS has received the most notoriety of these diseases, all are hazards to law enforcement officers. For example, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and tuberculosis are more infectious than HIV.

Deputies shall act responsibly in minimizing the risk of infection when dealing with any person, male or female, child, or adult, or with any body fluids. A few simple precautions, however, will avoid the risk of infection almost entirely. Deputies cannot refuse to work with or handle anyone - victim, complainant, or suspect – because of the deputy's fears of possible infection. Personnel shall not refuse to arrest or otherwise handle any person in a legitimate law enforcement context provided that the appropriate protective equipment is available. The measures provided herein will assist deputies in carrying out their duties while simultaneously minimizing health risks. The most likely danger from contact with HIV or other communicable diseases comes from handling blood or other body fluids as evidence or at the scene of injury or death. The agency does expect deputies to exercise caution when handling evidence and to review the policies in this General Order pertaining to evidence. Deputies have no way to determine with certainty if a citizen is infected with a communicable disease.

The agency shall provide employees with information and education on prevention of communicable diseases, as well as safety equipment and procedures to minimize their risks of [exposure](#). The agency has instituted post-exposure reporting, evaluation, and treatment for all members exposed to communicable diseases.

All personnel are advised that they shall not be subject to discriminatory treatment, nor bear any stigma, if they contract a communicable disease that becomes known to the agency. A communicable disease may qualify as a [disability](#) under federal law, so discrimination against infected persons is prohibited.

The agency expects deputies to become educators in their law enforcement work. Deputies can advise children, drug users, or prostitutes of the risk of infection and can further distribute educational literature. Additionally, deputies may refer citizens to health agencies such as the American Red Cross and the local health department. Agency personnel then may set an example in demonstrating rationality and confidence when dealing with communicable diseases.

III. TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT

- A. The Training Section supervisor shall be responsible for the training of new members of the Sheriff's Office on the first day of their employment as well as coordinating the communicable disease program within the Sheriff's Office. The Training Section shall also be responsible for annual employee training utilizing the county's online training system or other in-person training as deemed appropriate.
- B. All deputies will receive a [Personal Protection Equipment](#) Kit upon completion of the training. It will be the responsibility of each deputy to maintain the kit and replace items as necessary.

The PPE kit will contain the following:

- 1. Fluid-resistant, full-length open back isolation gown
 - 2. One pair of medical examination gloves
 - 3. SAFETY SHIELD combo (mouth and eye) protection
 - 4. Antiseptic hand wipes
 - 5. Bio-hazard waste bag
- C. New agency, county policies or procedures, as well as updates to the Virginia State Code will be disseminated to deputies as appropriate.
- D. All Crime Scene Investigators and Evidence Technicians will have crime scene and bio-hazard tape readily available in their vehicles for any incident where large amounts of body fluids have been spilled.
- E. Each deputy should also have a puncture resistant, leak-proof container for needles and other sharp objects.

V. GENERAL PRECAUTIONS

- A. General: Whenever possible, deputies shall wear disposable latex gloves when doing any of the following:
 - 1. Handling persons or items with any blood or body fluid products (hypodermic needles, syringes, or surfaces soiled with blood or body fluids, gun, or knife wounds).
 - 2. Packaging and handling any of the foregoing items as evidence.
 - 3. Cleaning up blood or other secretions that appear on floors, seats, equipment, handcuffs, shoes, clothing, pen, pencil, etc.
 - 4. All personnel whose skin encounters body fluids of another shall begin the disinfection process immediately. These procedures range from simple soap and water washing to the use of alcohol or antiseptic towelettes. All open cuts and abrasions shall be covered with waterproof bandages before personnel report for duty.
- B. Specialized Devices
 - 1. Masks shall be worn whenever there is potential for splashes, spray, spatter, or droplets of potentially infectious fluids threaten contamination through the eyes, nose, or mouth. Masks may be worn with other protective devices such as goggles.
 - 2. Gowns, jackets, coats, or aprons shall be worn as determined by the degree of the potential exposure.
- C. Handling People
 - 1. Wash hands thoroughly for thirty seconds with warm soap and water after removing gloves or after contact with the subject. If water is not available, antiseptic hand wipes found in the PPE kit may be used to decontaminate the skin.
 - 2. When transporting prisoners:
 - a. Do not put fingers in or near any person's mouth.
 - b. Separately transport people with body fluids on their body or clothing from other people.
 - c. Notify other support personnel, medical personnel, or law enforcement officers during a transfer of custody that the suspect has fluids on their

person. If it is known the subject has a communicable disease, staff should be advised to use "universal precautions".

- d. When a prisoner is transported to a hospital, the deputy should cooperate with hospital personnel without compromising the prisoner's safety and security.

D. Handling Objects

1. Non-evidentiary objects contaminated with body fluids shall be secured in a red bio-hazard bag and disposed of properly.
2. Deputies shall use extra care when handling any sharp objects. If deputies find syringes, they shall not bend, re-cap, or otherwise manipulate them in any way but shall place them in a puncture-resistant container provided by the agency.

E. Precautions When Bitten

The danger of infection through human bites is low. The employee/deputy cannot be infected with Hepatitis B (HBV) or Hepatitis C (HCV) through the blood of a human bite unless that person has blood in his or her mouth that encounters the employee/deputy's blood. HBV and HCV cannot be transmitted through saliva. Infection takes place through exposure of the eyes, mouth, or mucous membranes to the virus. Precautionary procedures to minimize the risk of infection include:

1. Encourage the wound to bleed by applying pressure and gently "milking" the wound.
2. Wash the area thoroughly with soap and hot water.
3. Seek medical attention at the nearest hospital.
4. Advise your immediate supervisor who shall follow the Worker's Compensation Accident Report Packet Guidelines, including the Exposure Incident Investigation form, and Authorization for Release of Medical Information form.

F. Precautions When Punctured by Needles or Knives

If a deputy is cut or punctured by a needle, knife, or other instrument while searching a suspect or handling contaminated evidence, these below general guidelines should be followed:

1. Allow the wound to bleed until all blood flow ceases (unless severe bleeding occurs).

2. Thoroughly cleanse the wound with soap and water.
3. Seek medical attention as soon as possible after the injury. A physician will decide the proper treatment.
4. Advise your immediate supervisor who shall follow the Worker's Compensation Accident Report Packet Guidelines, including the Exposure Incident Investigation Form, and Authorization for Release of Medical Information form.

G. Post Exposure Procedure

If an employee believes that they have been exposed to potential infectious material, they shall immediately notify a supervisor of the exposure. If the employee has potentially infectious materials on their person, they should thoroughly wash with soap and water.

The exposed employee should respond to Loudoun or Cornwall Hospitals for a base line blood draw. Blood draws may also be completed at the INOVA Occupational Health clinic during business hours upon coordination with a Sheriff's Office Human Resource liaison.

The exposing party shall be requested to submit to testing as provided in § 32.1-37.2 of the Virginia State Code. If consent is refused, the responsible supervisor shall notify the Exposure Control Officer immediately.

The responsible supervisor shall complete the Accident Reporting Packet and the Exposure Incident Investigation Form and submit within twenty-four hours of the exposure.

VI. VACCINATIONS

The agency affords all employees who have a risk for occupational exposure to Hepatitis B the opportunity to take the HBV vaccination series at no cost within 10 working days of assignment to an occupationally exposed duty. The vaccination shall be provided only after the employee has received agency training in communicable diseases, is medically fit for the vaccinations, as determined by a health care professional, and has not previously received them. Booster dose vaccinations will be provided as needed.

VII. OCCUPATIONAL EXPOSURE TO COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

A. Notification

1. All employees shall, as soon as practicable, document possible exposure to

infectious fluids or materials. In any case, employees shall immediately notify their supervisor of possible exposure. Virginia Code Section 32.1 – 45.2 requires public safety employees to immediately (or as soon thereafter as practical) notify their agency of any possible exposure incidents.

2. Examples of such exposures are:

- a. Direct contact with blood and other body fluids on chapped or open areas (cuts, scratches) on the skin or mucous membranes, i.e., eyes nose, and mouth.
- b. Direct mouth-to-mouth resuscitation (CPR) without the use of a one-way valve.
- c. Receiving a cut or puncture wound because of searching or arresting a suspect or handling contaminated evidence.

B. Reporting

If an exposure is suspected to have occurred, the following steps must be taken:

1. Report directly to the hospital or closest medical care facility and make it clear to the receptionist that they have experienced a potential exposure.
2. The deputy must notify their supervisor as soon as possible.
3. The supervisor shall complete Loudoun County Sheriff's Office Exposure Incident Investigation Form and the Worker's Compensation Accident Report Packet, outlining the circumstances surrounding the exposure within 24 hours.
4. After all appropriate steps have been taken, the supervisor shall notify the agency's Exposure Control Officer (Training Section Supervisor) so that notification of the exposure can be made to the appropriate facilities.
5. A copy of the Worker's Compensation Accident Report Packet, along with the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office Exposure Incident Investigation Form will be forwarded to the County of Loudoun Health Department where they will be kept for the duration of employment plus 30 years.
6. In cases where it is unclear that an exposure has occurred, COVID-19, tick bites or similar types of potential exposures, employee may complete the Sheriff's Office Exposure Notification form. The form should be submitted, accurately detailing the circumstances within 24 hours of notice of the exposure. If it is later determined an exposure or injury occurred, employees should complete all the steps above.

- a. The employee's supervisor and the Sheriff's Office Human Resources Unit will review all exposure notification forms and determine if any additional action is necessary. These forms will be recorded and retained in the employee's medical file.

C. Confidentiality

Confidentiality of information concerning any test results is paramount. An employee has a right to privacy regarding employer-maintained information about his/her health. There is no need for the agency to inform a supervisor that an employee has tested positive for HIV, HBV, or HCV.

1. The agency views a breach of confidentiality as a serious disciplinary problem that may result in suspension and/or termination.
2. Under most circumstances, medical authorities will retain confidential records unless the employee tested requires it or state law mandates its release.

D. Disposal of Contaminated Materials

1. Uniforms and Equipment

If a deputy's uniform or other equipment is contaminated with blood or any other body fluids, the deputy should, as soon as possible, carefully change out of the contaminated items, double bag them, place bio-hazard tape on the end of the bag to seal it, and then take it to the Quartermaster for proper disposal.

Deputies are expected to always keep a spare uniform available in case of just such an event. If the deputy needs any other items that are not readily available to the deputy, he or she should notify the supervisor so that the appropriate items may be obtained to allow the deputy to continue his or her tour of duty as needed. Any such uniform item disposed of should be noted in the deputy's incident report and the deputy shall then notify the Quartermaster as soon as possible to obtain a replacement.

2. Other Waste

Any contaminated substances must be placed in containers that can be closed and constructed to contain all contents and prevent leakage of fluids during handling, storage, or transport. Containers must be closed prior to moving/removal.

The Loudoun County Sheriff's Office will utilize the following containers for waste as designated below. The disposal of these containers is also indicated.

- Two (2) double red plastic bags (with or without Bio-Hazard label) will be used for disposable contaminated waste only. If bags leak or the outside of the bag becomes contaminated, the initial set of bags will be placed into a second set of double red bags. The top of the bags will be twisted, folded over and secured with tape. The bag will then require a label that advises the name of the originating organization, unit number, and date. These bag containers will be disposed of at an appropriate medical facility.

E. Federal Law

Employees infected by communicable diseases are generally protected by the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973. (A medical standard that is not job-related constitutes a prohibited personnel practice.)

F. Discrimination

The agency expects all personnel to continue their working relationships with any fellow employee recognized as having Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, or non-communicable tuberculosis. The agency will consider appropriate corrective or disciplinary action against any employee who threatens or refuses work with an infected employee or who disrupts the agency's mission.

G. Records

A record will be established for each employee with exposure. The records shall be maintained for the duration of employment plus 30 years in accordance with 29 CFR 1910.20. The Director of Occupational Health for the Loudoun County Department of Public Health is responsible for maintaining medical records.

The record shall include the following:

- Name and social security number of the employee
- A copy of the employee's Hepatitis B vaccination status to include the dates of the Hepatitis B vaccinations and any medical records relative to the employee's ability to receive vaccinations
- A copy of the examination results, medical testing, and any follow-up procedures
- A copy of the health care professional's written opinion
- A copy of information provided to the health care professional who evaluated the employee for suitability to receive hepatitis B vaccination prophylactically and/or after an exposure incident.

The record will be kept confidential. The contents will not be disclosed or reported to any person within or outside the workplace without the employee's written consent, except as required by law or regulation. Employee medical records required to be maintained under [OSHA](#) 19.10.1030 shall be provided upon request for examination and copying to the subject employee, or to anyone having written consent of the

employee, and the Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry in accordance with 29 CFR 1910.20.

- H. All initial and follow-up treatment concerning an exposure or suspected exposure will be paid for by the County if the exposure occurred as a part of the deputy's employment with the Sheriff's Office.