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| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>STRATFORD<br/>POLICE<br/>DEPARTMENT</b></p>  | Type of Directive:<br><b>Policy and Procedure</b>               | Updated:<br><b>10-14-2019</b> |
|   | Title:<br><b>Collection and Handling of Infectious Evidence</b> | No.<br><b>8.5</b>             |
|   | Issuing Authority:<br><b>Chief Joseph McNeil</b>                | Issued:<br><b>10-14-2019</b>  |
|   | Reference: 8.2.1  |                               |

**PURPOSE:**

In order to provide the maximum health and safety standards to personnel charged with the handling and collection of infectious evidence, at a crime scene, the below policy has been adopted.

**POLICY:**

**DEFINITIONS:**

**Airborne:** Diseases that are spread through air particles such as Tuberculosis and other viral or bacterial diseases.

**Biohazard:** Any contamination from a biological origin.

**Blood Borne:** A disease that can be spread through contamination by blood and other body fluids.

**Body Fluids:** Any fluid substance such as Blood, Saliva, Seminal Fluid, Vaginal Secretions, Urine, or Feces, which is expelled from the body.

**Contamination:** Contamination may be caused by coming into direct contact with any body fluids or with any object that has been contaminated by the fluid. The pathogen must enter through the body via broken skin or mucous membrane.

**Risk Period:** Blood borne pathogens have survived for long periods of time outside of the body.

**PROCEDURE:**

**General Precautions**

There is no way to be sure that a crime scene does not contain infectious hazards material. Therefore, at least the minimum amount of precaution and protection should be taken anytime there is a risk of exposure to bodily fluids.

Officers will treat all human fluids as if they are known to be infectious. The following minimum precautions should be taken while working at any crime scene.

- Wear department issue disposable Latex gloves at all times
- Double glove if the conditions warrant it
- Remove all rings, bracelets, or watches prior to wearing latex gloves
- Replace gloves immediately if they become heavily stained or damaged
- Keep gloved hands away from the eyes, nose, and mouth
- Avoid the nervous habit of placing items such as pencils or pens in your mouth
- If practical, use only disposable items at a crime scene when there is a risk of contamination
- Non-disposable items should be decontaminated after being used in a contaminated area
- Never eat, drink or smoke while in the crime scene area.
- Remove gloves immediately after leaving the crime scene area
- Gloves should be removed from the hands by pulling them from the top and turning them inside out
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water or disinfectant, as soon as possible, when leaving the crime scene
- Be continually alert for sharp objects such as hypodermic needles or syringes, knives, razor blades, broken glass, nails, metal paper staples, and sharp metal from motor vehicle accidents

"DO NOT TOUCH ANYTHING UNLESS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY"

### **Procedures for Uniformed Officers**

When entering a contaminated crime scene follow all general precautions listed in this policy. Attempt to confirm the fact that there might be infectious material on the scene. Secure the scene and advise anyone entering the scene about the potential infection risk.

### **Procedures for Crime Scene Search**

Minimum precautions should be taken when searching a contaminated crime scene. Follow all general precautions listed in this policy.

Surgical masks and protective goggles should be considered when there is a possibility that contaminated evidence may strike the face, mouth, nose, or eyes. This is especially true when scraping dried blood samples.

Disposable "Tyvek" jumpsuits, hoods, and/or shoe covers, will be provided and worn if the situation commands such protection.

If cotton gloves are worn during fingerprint work, they should be worn over latex gloves. Fingerprint examiners should use caution when doing latent print comparisons.

Red contamination bags marked with biohazard warnings will be set for the sole purpose of collecting contaminated items for disposal.

Prior to releasing the crime scene, the owner or occupant will be notified of the contamination and the potential risk. Where required, advice will be given on how to protect oneself during clean up and how to properly decontaminate the area.

### **Packaging of Evidence**

"Sharps Containers" will be used to transport all hypodermic needles and syringes. Never attempt to recap a needle or bend it over. Package needles/syringes as soon as possible.

Sharp items such as knives, broken glass, etc. will be packaged to protect the handler against coming in contact with the sharp edges. Containers will be clearly marked with the contents information so they do not have to be opened. Do not seal packages with staples.

Warnings will be placed on all contaminated evidence stating that the item within is or may be contaminated with an infectious disease. Contaminated evidence being shipped to a lab via U.S. Mail will be sealed, triple wrapped, and display the proper biohazard warning labels.

Evidence sheets, property forms, or receipts, will be clearly marked indicating that the package does or may contain biohazard material.

If available, the specific pathogen should be detailed on the report.

### **Decontamination procedures**

Non-disposable items such as clothing, shoes, equipment, or other similar items, may be decontaminated by thoroughly wiping down with 70% alcohol solution, 10% bleach solution, or commercially manufactured disinfectant.

### **Disposal Procedures**

All sharp items will be packaged in approved containers or packaged so that the sharp edges are padded. All contaminated items will be placed in a red contamination bag, marked with biohazard warnings. These bags will only be used for contaminated items. The biohazard material will be turned over to the EMS or other authorized biohazard handler for proper disposal. Contaminated material will never be disposed of via routine office trash collection.

### **Return of Contaminated Evidence to Owner**

If contaminated evidence has to be returned to the owner, the items will be properly packaged and labeled with biohazard warnings. The owner will be notified in writing as to the possible contamination of the item and will sign a receipt acknowledging the condition. Where required, advice will be given on how to decontaminate the item and protect oneself during the process.

### **Exposure**

In the event of an accidental puncture, cut, or exposure from a contaminated item immediately wash the exposed area with soap and water. If exposure is to the eyes, flush with copious amounts of water for a minimum of 15 minutes. Cleanse the wound sight with an antiseptic. Seek medical attention as soon as possible.

In the event clothing becomes contaminated it will be changed as soon as possible. Contaminated clothing will be packaged for decontamination or disposal. All exposures will be reported and documented under Town guidelines dated January 11, 1989.

It is strongly recommended that all personnel be vaccinated for tetanus and hepatitis.