

**Infectious Materials & Exposure Control Policy**

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<b>Title:</b>	Infectious Materials and Exposure Control Policy
<b>Adopted on:</b>	Sept. 29, 2021
<b>Adopted by:</b>	City Manager
<b>Jurisdiction:</b>	Safety Coordinator
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**1. INTRODUCTION**

The City of Weyburn is committed to taking all reasonable steps to protect workers, staff, visitors, contractors, clients, and the general public from contamination or infection by bio-hazardous materials. To that end, all activities involving substances must be categorized with regard to:

- The type of materials being used or handled;
- The risk group classification of organisms being used or handled; and,
- The risk of exposure that the bio-hazardous substances present, to all workers and the general public.

It is essential that everyone involved in areas handling and/ or using infectious/ biohazard materials or who are involved in hands-on-contact with the public be made aware of and have a sound knowledge of:

- The potential sources of contamination in their work areas;
- The correct procedures for the handling of all infectious or bio-hazardous substances and materials and of substances and materials that may become contaminated;
- The correct procedures for dealing with spillage of contaminated material and the decontamination of areas affected by these spills;
- The immediate and proper disposal of contaminated materials; and,
- The correct personal hygiene necessary to prevent infection or other health problems due to bio-hazardous materials.

Every worker and/or contractor working in areas that involve the handling and/ or use of any bio-hazardous substances has a responsibility to the City of Weyburn, their fellow workers, visitors, contractors and themselves to ensure a safe working environment. Each person working in these areas must be familiar with and understand these responsibilities.

Infection is caused by pathogens ('bugs' or microorganisms) such as bacteria, viruses, protozoa or fungi getting into or onto the body. It can take some time before a worker begins to show symptoms of illness. Consequently an infected person may unwittingly be spreading the disease during the incubation period. Infection control in the workplace attempts to prevent pathogens from coming into contact with a worker in the first place.

The purpose of infection control in the workplace is to prevent pathogens being passed from one person to another. Good infection control is to assume that everyone is potentially infectious.

Proper procedures have to be followed at all times. Every workplace should have a well-equipped first aid kit, with at least one worker trained in first aid. Personal Protective Equipment must be provided and worn whenever it is deemed to be necessary.

Infection can be spread in a variety of ways, such as:

- Airborne - coughing and sneezing releases airborne pathogens that may be inhaled by others.
- Contaminated material or food - the pathogens in a person's feces may be spread to food or other objects, if their hands are dirty.
- Skin-to-skin contact - the transfer of some pathogens can occur through touch, or by sharing personal items, clothing or objects.
- Contact with body fluids - pathogens in body fluids such as saliva, feces or blood can be passed to another person through contact via cuts or abrasions, or through the mucus membranes of the mouth and eyes.

## **2. RISK GROUP CLASSIFICATION:**

### **Risk Group 1:**

A microorganism that is unlikely to cause human, animal or plant disease.

### **Risk Group 2:**

A pathogen that can cause human, animal, or plant disease but is unlikely to be a serious hazard to healthy workers, the community, or the environment; exposures may cause infection but effective treatment and preventative measures are available, and the risk is limited.

This group may include Bacteria, Viruses, Protozoa and Parasites. Examples of diseases caused by this group include, Clostridium Tetani, Salmonella, Hepatitis, Measles, Toxoplasma Gondii, and Echinococcus etc.

### **Risk Group 3:**

This group includes pathogens that usually causes serious human disease but is not ordinarily spread by casual contact. There are usually effective preventative measures or treatments available.

This group includes Bacteria, Fungi and Viruses. Examples of diseases caused by this group include Chlamydia Psittaci, Tuberculosis, Blastomyces Dermatitis, Hantavirus, Yellow Fever, Western Equine Encephalitis, and Rabies etc.

### **Risk Group 4:**

This group includes pathogens that usually produce life-threatening human or animal disease and represents a serious hazard to workers. Pathogens in this group are readily transmissible from one individual to another. Effective treatment and preventative measures are not usually or readily available.

This group consists solely of Viruses. Examples of diseases caused by this group include, Hemorrhagic Fever, Ebola Virus, Russian Spring-Summer Encephalitis, and Monkey Pox etc.

**Note:** A more complete list may be found in the *Saskatchewan Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020*.

**Because each workplace will be different, the various work areas involved with handling or contacting infectious/bio-hazardous materials should have in place infection control practices and protocols specific to their work-area based on national standards and have the appropriate literature readily available.**

**3. PURPOSE**

The primary purpose of this document is to act as a guideline to advise workers and staff that precautions need to be taken before, during and after handling, storage, and disposal of bio-hazardous and potentially bio-hazardous materials and to ensure correct procedures are being followed.

All infectious and potential infectious materials will be handled with the required degree of safety as determined in Section 85 of the Saskatchewan *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, 2020*.

The disposal of all contaminated materials is in accordance with accepted practice. The handling and disposal of these materials does not present any safety or public health concern to workers or the general public.

**4. SCOPE**

This document details protocols and guidelines to be followed when handling any infectious or potentially infectious materials involving microorganisms, human or animal blood, blood products and other body substances by all workers and contractors of the City of Weyburn.

All procedures shall conform to government legislation, industry best practices, and City of Weyburn policies and procedures.

**5. TRAINING**

Supervisors will ensure that all workers working in their work areas are adequately instructed and trained, in current infection control measures prior to handling, using, or partaking in procedures involving bio-hazardous materials or substances.

Supervisors must emphasize the importance of following these procedures by all workers and staff. New employees required to handle infectious materials must be given an orientation program to increase their awareness and to assist in their understanding of the policies and guidelines for infection control.

**Education and training should include:**

- Basic microbiology involving microorganism reservoirs, sources and causes of contamination, infection and disease, causes and modes of microbe transmission;
- Infection control principles;
- The importance of good hygiene and correct hand washing procedures;
- Standard and specialized laboratory and equipment requirements;
- The cleaning and disinfecting of work areas;
- The use of protective clothing and equipment;
- The dealing with spills;
- The handling and disposal of sharps;
- The management of exposures and accidents;
- The handling of specimens;
- Proper waste disposal; and,
- The availability of immunization.

## 6. IMMUNIZATION

The City of Weyburn will pay for the following vaccination costs for Police, Fire, Refuse, Sewage & Water Treatment Staff:

- Hepatitis A & B
- Tetanus / Diphtheria / Polio
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella
- Influenza
- COVID-19

**Note: There is a charge for Hepatitis A & B doses. The City of Weyburn will reimburse this cost please consult your supervisor for details.**

## 7. UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS:

Universal precautions are designed to prevent skin contact with body fluids or other infectious materials. The safest and most efficient way of dealing with all potential infectious exposure incidents is to use the following universal precautions:

- Wear gloves before touching any non-intact skin or body fluids.
- Wash your hands and any other skin surfaces that may have come in contact with blood or other body fluids.
- Wash your hands immediately after removing gloves if possible.
- Wear masks and protective eyewear when performing any work in which there may be splashes of body fluids or other infectious materials.
- Dispose of all sharps and needles by placing them in puncture resistant containers.
- Never handle a hypodermic needle with your bare hands.
- Always pick up hypodermic needles by the barrel. Never attempt to bend or remove the needle.

### **Hand Washing:**

The spread of many pathogens can be prevented with regular hand washing. Hand washing is one of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of infection and disease. You should thoroughly wash your hands with water and soap for at least 15 seconds after using the toilet, before preparing food, after contact with body fluids, and after touching other workers or potentially contaminated equipment. Proper hand washing technique:

- Turn on water faucet and run water until water is warm
- Run out towel first. The dispenser is dirty and may be contaminated.
- Thoroughly wet your hands
- Apply liquid soap
- Rub hands together for at least ten – fifteen seconds
- Scrub between fingers, knuckles and nails
- Rinse your hands with the fingers pointing downwards under the running water. The running water carries debris away from your hands.
- Use paper towels to dry your hands
- Discard paper towels into the wastebasket.

**Unbroken skin:**

Unbroken healthy skin is a major barrier to pathogens. To protect yourself and others cover any cuts or abrasions with a waterproof bandage. If you assist someone who has broken skin wear disposable gloves if they are available and immediately wash your hands after assisting the person to cover the wound.

**Gloves:**

Wear gloves if you are handling body fluids or equipment / materials that may contain body fluids. Wash your hands often and replace ripped or torn gloves as soon as possible.

When rendering first aid assistance always discard disposable gloves after each use. Do not use disposable gloves to assist more than one person.

Reusable gloves are often used for tasks such as hauling / collecting trash, cleaning restrooms and many other routine jobs. Reusable gloves should be sprayed / cleaned with a detergent soap periodically and allowed to air dry. They should be discarded when they become ripped or very dirty.

**Personal items:**

- Never share towels, clothing, razors, toothbrushes, shavers or other personal items.
- Avoid touching your hair, nose or mouth unnecessarily.
- Use disinfectants to clean up blood and other spills of bodily fluids.
- When using disinfectants - always wear gloves, clean the surfaces before using the disinfectant, and always follow the manufacturer's instructions exactly.

**8. PROCEDURE FOR CLEAN-UP OF BLOOD OR BODY FLUID SPILLS:**

Most City of Weyburn workers will never have to clean up blood or body fluid spills in the normal course of their duties. However, should the occasion arise where it becomes necessary, infection control procedures should be followed carefully. Workers should always:

- Isolate the area.
- Wear gloves, a plastic apron and eye protection, such as goggles or a face shield.
- Soak up the fluid with disposable paper towels. If cleaning vomit, use a mess kit and sweep up.
- Flood the contaminated area with an approved disinfecting agent or a 1:100 chlorine/bleach mixture. An excellent disinfectant mixture consists of one part bleach to 10 parts water.
- Allow the approved disinfecting agent or bleach mixture to remain on the contaminated area for 10 minutes.
- While wearing gloves push the paper towels at the edge of the spill into the center of the spill. Add more towels if required.
- Discard the saturated paper towels into a proper container.
- Wash or mop the cleaned-up area with hospital grade quat disinfectant.
- Dry the area.
- Discard your gloves.
- Wash your hands.

To dispose of infectious waste that has been contaminated with blood or other body fluids, you should:

- Wear heavy duty gloves.

- Place waste in plastic bags marked 'infectious waste' or with a biological hazard symbol and dispose of in the dumpster immediately.
- Handle all contaminated wastes carefully to prevent body contact and injury. For example, carry objects or waste containers and bags away from your body to reduce the chance of coming in contact with a sharp object.
- Rinse any contaminated clothing in cold running water, soak in bleach solution for half an hour, then wash separately from other clothing or linen with hot water and detergent.

## **9. PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING NEEDLES**

Infection control procedures when handling needles and other sharp contaminated objects include:

- Never attempt to re-cap or bend used needles.
- Handle by the barrel.
- Place in an appropriate puncture-proof container, which is yellow and labeled 'Danger contaminated sharps' and marked with a black biohazard symbol. These containers are available from your supervisor. When full they can be returned to a pharmacy for disposal.

## **10. PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED IF A WORKER RECEIVES A NEEDLE STICK:**

A worker who receives a needle stick must:

- Wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water as soon as possible.
- Report the incident to their supervisor as soon as possible.
- The supervisor and the worker will complete a Workers' Compensation Board accident report and a City of Weyburn accident report.
- The worker is strongly urged to consult medical assistance. The City of Weyburn will assist the worker in obtaining medical aid.

## **11. PROCEDURE IF YOU COME IN CONTACT WITH BODY FLUIDS:**

If you come in contact with blood or body fluids, you should:

- Flush the area with running water.
- Wash the area with plenty of warm water and soap.
- Report the incident to your supervisor.
- Record the incident by completing a Workers' Compensation Report and a City of Weyburn accident report.
- Seek medical advice.

## **12. PROCEDURE FOR CLEANING CONTAMINATED SURFACES**

- Washable surfaces such as tables, desks etc. which are routinely exposed to mucous or saliva should be cleaned with a disinfectant detergent and wiped clean.
- Wear gloves (either disposable or reusable) and spray the infected object with a disinfectant detergent. Wipe the area clean and allow to air dry.
- Carpets should be shampooed using a disinfectant shampoo.
- Remove gloves and discard if they are disposable gloves, spray the gloves with the disinfectant detergent and allow to air dry if they are reusable gloves.

- Wash your hands

### **13. PROCEDURE FOR SOILED CLOTHING:**

If your clothing becomes contaminated by body fluids:

- Wear gloves and remove the contaminated clothing. Place the soiled clothing in a plastic bag.
- Pre-soak soiled laundry in cold water to remove blood and other body fluids.
- Wash the clothing using regular laundry soap and wash at the highest temperature possible. Place a half-cup of bleach with each laundry load.
- Dry the clothing on the hottest setting possible.
- Dry cleaning is also another safe option.

**Note:** The risk of disease transmission from clothing contaminated by body fluids is minimal.

### **14. PROCEDURE FOR THE DISPOSAL OF DEAD DOMESTIC ANIMALS**

City of Weyburn Public Works or Parks Department will pick up and remove any dead domestic animals.

If it is required for a worker to pick up a dead pet such as a dog or cat:

- Observe proper roadway safety procedures.
- Do not handle the dead animal with your bare hands. Always wear gloves.
- If the animal has a collar or tags, remove them and deliver them to Public Works Administrative Assistant.
- Notify Public Works Administrative Assistant of the location where the animal was picked up and provide a brief description of the animal. Public Works Administrative Assistant will record this information and refer to it when dealing with Public calls regarding missing animals.
- Place the dead body in a plastic bag or cardboard box.
- Dispose of the body at the landfill.

**Note:** Under no circumstances should an animal body be left in the back of a vehicle.

### **15. PROCEDURE FOR THE DISPOSAL OF DEAD BIRDS**

If it becomes necessary for you to handle a dead bird, please take the following precautions:

- Wear gloves. Do not handle any dead birds with your bare hands.
- Put the bird in a plastic bag. If there is a chance that the bag will get punctured, double bag the bird.
- Note the location and time of the pickup.

**Note:** It is not believed that West Nile disease can be contacted from dead birds however caution is always prudent.

### **16. WEST NILE DISEASE**

West Nile Virus can only be spread to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito. It cannot be transmitted from human to human nor can it be picked up from handling an infected bird. There are 47 different species of mosquitoes in Saskatchewan, however only a few are known to carry the disease. Weyburn is very fortunate that the mosquitoes that have been associated with transmitting this disease are not common in the City.

Workers can take preventative measures to minimize the opportunity for mosquito bites by:

- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants and insect repellent;
- Minimizing time spent outdoors between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active;
- Making sure that all windows and doors in homes are tight-fitting and properly screened; and,
- Removing standing water from properties to discourage mosquito breeding.

## **17. COVID-19**

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can cause diseases ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). Some cause illness in people, while others circulate among animals. Some coronaviruses transmit easily from person to person while others do not. Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), a new virus and the cause of COVID-19, which causes mild to moderately severe symptoms and deaths.

COVID-19 can be transmitted by people who have symptoms and by people who are infectious but not symptomatic in the two days before symptoms develop, spreading from an infected person to others through respiratory droplets and aerosols when an infected person coughs, sneezes, sings, shouts or talks.

Most people with COVID-19 illness will recover on their own. Severe or worsening symptoms may require supportive treatment in hospital.

Preventative measures the City has implemented include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Mandatory Testing Program
- Sanitization stations at all entrances and exits of city buildings.
- Sneeze guards.
- Assigned vehicles to designated employees with disinfectant cleaners available
- Social distancing.
- Enhanced cleaning procedures for all city buildings and equipment.
- Temperature checks for all staff and patrons of the leisure centre; (Suspended)
- Online teleconference and video conferencing; and
- Temporary mandatory mask use and provided masks for all employees.

## **18. FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO OBTAIN HELP**

- Your Doctor
- Your local Health Authority
- City of Weyburn Safety Coordinator