

GENERAL ORDER, OPERATIONS, NUMBER 25
APRIL 3, 2001
WATERLOO POLICE DEPARTMENT

A. SUBJECT:

Exposure to Infectious Diseases

B. PURPOSE:

Employees, through the requirement of public safety responsibility, may have routine contact with people at high risk for infectious disease. These encounters may now carry an additional hazard for officers, co-workers and family, who may be unwittingly and unavoidably exposed to infectious diseases. The intent of this General Order is not to enlarge on those fears that may or may not exist in the minds of individuals regarding the subject of infectious diseases, but rather to provide a rational approach to an existing problem, to protect the health and rights of all segments of the community.

C. POLICY:

1. To establish standard policy, procedures and guidelines with reference to infectious disease encounters and/or exposures.

2. Definitions:

a. Significant Exposure: Direct skin, open sores, cuts or wounds or mucous membrane contact with body fluids, such as blood, blood products, vomit, sputum, urine, secretions or pus from wounds, may constitute a significant exposure. Additionally, prolonged or close contact with someone who is frequently coughing may result in significant exposure if a contagious disease is present.

b. Infectious Diseases: For the purposes of this General Order, listed on the following page are some infectious diseases and their routes of transmission:

Disease

Route of Transmission

1. Aids
Hepatitis "B"

Your blood or body fluids having contact with contaminated blood or semen, contaminated needles, or blood products.

Disease

Route of Transmission

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 2. | Hepatitis
non "A" non "B" | Usually through blood
transfusions |
| 3. | Hepatitis "A"
Viral Meningitis | Contaminated food or water |
| 4. | Neisseria Men.
Tuberculosis
Other bacterial | Airborne: inhaling bacteria
spread by coughing,
and/or nasal secretions or sputum
of infected persons. |
| 5. | Herpes
Syphilis | Sexually or with direct
contact with blood or contact with
drainage of lesions. |

- c. "Red Tag": Shall mean a warning tag, properly marked to indicate a bio-hazard. This tag shall designate and only be used to indicate contaminated or suspected contaminated material, equipment or facilities.

D. PROCEDURES:

1. Reporting of Significant Exposures:
 - a. All employees shall immediately report the exposure or suspected exposure to the Watch Commander.
 - b. Employees shall open a separate Waterloo Police Incident Report, classification occupational accidents, and detail all facts and circumstances surrounding the exposure or suspected exposure before ending the tour of duty. Explicit details concerning the background of the suspected carrier and method of transmission must be included.
 - c. Any employee suffering an actual or suspected significant exposure shall obtain an "IOWA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH, REPORT OF EXPOSURE TO INFECTIOUS DISEASE" form (attachment 1) from the Emergency Departments or Occupational Health Departments of Covenant Medical Center or Allen Memorial Hospital.
 - d. **IT IS THE EMPLOYEE'S RESPONSIBILITY (and in the employee's best interest) TO REQUEST AND COMPLETE THE IOWA DPH REPORT OF EXPOSURE TO INFECTIOUS DISEASE FORM.** The

hospital will not initiate this report or follow up procedures without a specific request from the employee, even if an employee requests medical attention for exposure to an infectious disease.

- e. The employee shall complete the form and return it to the source from which it was obtained. The hospital will then:
 - 1. Certify the occurrence or non-occurrence of an exposure or significant exposure and return a copy of the report to the Department Personnel Officer.
 - 2. Forward a copy of the report to the final medical facility if the source patient is transferred.
 - 3. Notify the employee or the Department Personnel Officer as soon as is reasonably possible if the source patient has one of the diseases specified on the form.
 - 4. Send a copy of the report to the Department Personnel Officer when follow-up is completed.
 - 5. Maintain records of all reports.

- f. If the source individual is not available for hospital personnel to request a blood sample (e.g. suspect escaped custody) the employee who has been exposed to an infectious disease shall complete the Report of Exposure to Infectious Disease form, submit it to hospital personnel, and put an Attempt To Locate on the source individual for the purpose of obtaining consent for a blood specimen.

- g. The employee's Watch supervisor shall:
 - 1. Review the incident report and the Waterloo Police Department Blood Borne Pathogen and Infectious Disease Exposure Control Plan to determine if a significant exposure has taken place.
 - 2. Refer the exposed employee to the authorized City of Waterloo Health Care Provider for work related injury/illness.
 - 3. "Red Tag" and secure any contaminated police equipment, vehicles, or facilities to ensure non-usage until proper decontamination procedures can be initiated.
 - 4. Make additional notifications deemed necessary such as, but not limited to, jail, judicial, and county health authorities.

2. Infection Control

- a. Because it is impossible to tell who is infected with an infectious disease, treat everyone's blood or body fluids with caution and as if they were infected with an infectious disease, regardless of the person's gender, age, background or race.

- b. Employees should be aware that certain prescribed medications, such as steroids and asthma medications, suppress their immune systems and make them more susceptible to infectious disease. Employees should consult with their private physician if they are taking prescription drugs.
- c. Pregnant employees should be advised to report to their physician any direct contacts with body fluids in the line of duty. Infectious viruses can cause severe problems in newborns.
- d. The simplest and most effective way to stop the spread of any infection is to wash your hands frequently with soap and water and to keep your hands away from your eyes, ears, mouth and nose. Wash even if you have worn gloves!
- e. Employees who have skin cuts, sores, or open abrasions, should keep these areas covered with sterile first aid materials prior to and during duty hours.
- f. If hand washing is not feasible, employees should use the issued surgical hand scrub or other waterless hand disinfecting material. As soon as possible, proper hand washing using a disinfecting soap or scrub should be performed.
- g. The issued disposable gloves and/or face masks should be worn whenever you feel you may come in contact with blood or body fluids. Such situations may include but are not limited to: personal injury vehicle accidents, arrests/custodies, fights, evidence collection (OWI - blood and urine, sexual abuse, intravenous drug paraphernalia), and crime scene searches.
 - 1. Personnel should be aware that rings, jewelry, or long fingernails may compromise the integrity of protective gloves. They should make certain the gloves are not torn prior to use.
 - 2. Persons of high-risk groups, including homosexuals, intravenous drug users, and prostitutes should be treated with caution. Where violence or an altercation is likely, protective disposable gloves should be worn. Extreme caution should be used during the search of suspected drug users or dealers to prevent accidental skin punctures by needles. Extreme caution must also be used when reaching into areas, such as under car seats, clothing pockets, etc., that are not visible.
 - 3. Situations which constitute an exposure including, but not limited to, being stuck with a hypodermic needle, cut with a knife or other sharp object(s) or being victim of a wound or

human bite should immediately:

- a. Encourage the wound to bleed by application of pressure to "milk" the wound;
 - b. Wash the area thoroughly with soap and hot water, (flush eyes with water only);
 - c. Report the exposure to the Watch Commander/Supervisor and seek medical attention as soon as possible.
- h. Whenever it is necessary to administer CPR, use the safety facemask with one-way valve, which is supplied in the police vehicles. Once used, seal and "red tag" this face mask in the provided contamination container and leave it with the Watch Commander for proper decontamination procedures.
- i. Personal eye wear such as prescription lenses, sunglasses, safety glasses, may also help prevent eye contamination.
- j. Shoes can become contaminated with body fluids, which might be transported from crime scene to automobiles, the police station, or home. When in doubt, decontaminate as soon as possible with a bleach solution that is available in the radio room adjacent to the briefing room.
3. Contaminated Uniform or evidence items.
- a. Uniforms or other clothing contaminated with blood or other bodily fluids should be changed before finishing or leaving the watch in order to minimize transmission to other officers, civilians, vehicles or family members. Officers should maintain a change of appropriate clothing at the Police Department for this purpose.
 - b. Employees shall place their contaminated uniforms and/or other clothing in the red infectious materials bags that are located in the police radio room.
 1. Employees shall put their name and "Waterloo Police Department" on the top portion of a pink laundry tag (also located in the radio room) and attach it to the red infectious materials bag.
 2. The employee shall keep the bottom portion of the laundry tag in order to claim the uniform after it is cleaned.
 3. The laundry tag shall NOT be placed inside the bag with the contaminated uniform as it too could become contaminated.
 4. The sealed infectious materials bag with attached laundry tag

shall then be locked in one of the property evidence bins in the basement hallway.

5. Property/Evidence personnel will then contact the Department's contract cleaner who will pick up the contaminated items and launder them at no charge to the employee.
 6. The employee shall be responsible for picking up his laundry from the contract cleaners. (Varsity Cleaners was the contract cleaner at the time this general order was published, if in doubt, check with Property/Evidence personnel).
- c. Any contaminated items that cannot be laundered, decontaminated, or reused shall be placed in a red infectious materials bag and discarded in the ENVIRO-SAF waste barrel (yellow barrel with red placard/lettering) that is located beside the property/evidence bins in the basement hallway.
 - d. Under no circumstances allow any contaminated police equipment (such as cameras, tools, firearms, etc.) to be returned to service without proper decontamination with a cleaning of hydrochloride bleach (household bleach) and water (one part bleach to nine parts water), available at the police department.
 - e. Any crime scene evidence or other seized property suspected to be contaminated shall be securely sealed in infectious materials bags. Property tags shall be affixed to the outside of the bag to avoid the spread of contamination to the tag and to Property/Evidence personnel.
 1. Hypodermic needles or other "sharps", which have evidentiary value, shall be placed in the small, cotton-filled, cardboard boxes located in the radio room and shall be red tagged.
 2. Needles or other "sharps" which are not to be used as evidence shall be disposed of in the marked "sharps" containers which are located in the radio room and the Crime Lab.
4. Cleaning of Equipment, Vehicles and Building Facilities
 - a. Consider all blood and body fluids to be contaminated. Therefore, when cleaning up any blood or body fluids, wear gloves or necessary protective clothing.
 - b. First use warm water and soap to break down the blood or body fluids.
 - c. Secondary cleaning should then be done with hydrochloride bleach

(household bleach) and water, (mixed one part bleach to nine parts water).

d. Vehicles

1. Immediately report any vehicle contamination to the Watch Commander.
2. To remove possible droplet, airborne infections, put vehicle in well-ventilated area, open all windows for fifteen to twenty minutes.
3. Spray the contaminated area of the vehicle with bleach solution.
4. "Red Tag", lock and secure the vehicle. Leave the keys with the Watch Commander. The "Red Tag" should be attached to the steering wheel of the vehicle to alert and prevent driving of the vehicle until the vehicle can be additionally decontaminated.

e. Building Facility

1. Any area of the police facility, such as but not limited to, the elevator, the holding cell, interview rooms, and restrooms; which are contaminated by blood or body fluids shall immediately be reported to the Watch Commander,
2. Spray the contaminated area of the facility with bleach solution.
3. "Red Tag" and secure the immediate contaminated area until additional decontamination procedures can be completed.
4. The Watch Commander shall advise working employees and the subsequent Watch employees of the contaminated area(s).

5. Supplies

- a. Replacement disposable gloves, face masks, disinfectant, bleach solution, dry cleaning tags, contamination containers or bags, and "red tags"; will be stored in the Radio Room and available by authorization of the Watch Commander.
- b. The Property Section shall be responsible to acquire and distribute the necessary protection items and shall maintain and stock the Radio Room with replacement items.

6. Confidentiality

- a. Employees who actually contract an infectious disease must report this to the Department Personnel Officer.

- b. Strict patient confidentiality is of the utmost importance and will be maintained by all involved; however, the health of our city employees is of equal importance and should not suffer for the sake of patient confidentiality.

BY ORDER OF:

Thomas J. Jennings
Chief of Police