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| ***REPLACE WITH YOUR MASTHEAD*** | | |
| **VFIS logo black JPG** | **SOG Title:** | |
| **SOG Number:** | |
| **Original Date:** | **Revision Date:** |
| **ABC Fire Department General Operating Guideline** | | |

**Communicable Diseases**

***This is a sample of a standard operating guideline (SOG) on this topic. You should review the content, modify as appropriate for your organization, have it reviewed by your leadership team and if appropriate your legal counsel. Once adopted, make sure the SOG is communicated to members, implemented and performance monitored for effective implementation.***

**Purpose:**

To provide guidelines for members of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in preventing the contraction of communicable diseases.

**Scope:**

It is the responsibility of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to ensure that its members are able to perform their duties in a safe and effective manner. Life-endangering communicable diseases have threatened the safe performance of daily fire and rescue operations. Therefore, it shall be the policy of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to continuously provide its members with up to date safety procedures and communicable disease information that will assist in minimizing exposure, while increasing their understanding of the nature and potential risks of communicable diseases.

Definitions:

Body Fluids – Liquid secretions including, but not limited to blood, semen, vaginal fluids or other secretions that may contain these fluids, such as saliva, vomit, urine or feces.

Communicable Disease – Those illnesses that are transmitted through contact with the body fluid(s) of an infected individual.

**Procedure:**

1. Communicable Disease Prevention
   1. In order to minimize potential exposure to communicable diseases firefighters should assume that all persons are potential carriers of a communicable disease.
   2. Disposable gloves shall be worn when delivering patient care and when handling any persons clothing or equipment with body fluids on them.

ALL RESCUE PERSONNEL SHALL “DOUBLE GLOVE” BEFORE ENGAGING IN ANY RESCUE OPERATIONS

* 1. Disposable gloves, protective eyewear (not just helmet face shields), and full protective clothing shall be worn where body fluids may be splashed upon a firefighter.
  2. No firefighter will administer mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to anyone without the use of protective mouthpiece or other approved barrier device.
  3. Special precautions shall be taken when working around sharp objects or instruments. Any syringe or other surgical instrument shall be considered contaminated and unnecessary handling of such instruments should be avoided.
  4. No firefighter shall assist the police in gathering or handling any evidence or other objects that may be contaminated without the proper personal protective equipment. This includes searching in areas with no or limited visibility for potential evidence.
  5. Firefighters shall not smoke, eat or drink around all medical emergencies and when there are spilled body fluids.
  6. Any equipment contaminated by body fluids shall be double-bagged in appropriately marked bags and either disposed of or decontaminated before being returned to service.

1. Decontamination
   1. Any unprotected skin surfaces that are exposed to body fluids shall be immediately and thoroughly washed with hot water and disinfectant soap for at least two minutes before rinsing and drying.
   2. If thorough washing is not immediately possible, cleaning with a disinfectant towellette will be initiated immediately.
   3. Any clothing/protective equipment that has been exposed to body fluids shall be rinsed thoroughly before removal. Disposable gloves should be discarded.
   4. All open cuts and wounds should be covered and bandaged before participating in potentially hazardous operations.
   5. Contaminated protective clothing and street clothing shall be removed as soon as practical. Contaminated clothing shall be thoroughly cleaned and washed before wearing again.
   6. Non-disposable equipment shall be disinfected by completing the following the following minimum procedures. Personnel involved in these procedures shall be fully protected with “proper gloves” and full protective clothing.
      1. Remove excess body fluids by rinsing with a hose line or using approved absorbent materials. Use caution not to splash body fluids when rinsing with a hose line.
      2. Wash equipment with a freshly prepared solution of one part chlorine bleach to ten parts water. A fungicide/micro bacterial disinfectant shall be used if available.
   7. Any equipment that cannot be satisfactorily cleaned shall be disposed of in accordance with local, state and federal laws.
2. Protective Equipment
   1. All fire/rescue personnel shall be supplied with a pair of disposable latex gloves. A second pair is available from the equipment officer. Each firefighter is responsible for assuring they have two sets.
   2. Disposable latex gloves shall be available in all apparatus.
   3. All rescue personnel shall be equipped with leather gloves.
   4. HIV kits, protective coveralls, face shields, and disposal bags shall be available in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for potential severe exposures.
   5. A fully supplied Body Fluids Clean-Up Kit shall be available in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
3. Line of Duty Exposure to Communicable Disease
   1. Any firefighter who has physical contact with any body fluid shall be considered exposed to potential communicable disease. Proper follow-up treatment and socumentation is required.
   2. If exposure occurs, the firefighter shall immediately be withdrawn from service and the fire chief or his/her designee shall be notified.
   3. Exposed firefighters shall be disinfected and de-contaminated as soon as possible.
   4. Exposed firefighters shall be transported to an appropriate health care facility for clinical and serological testing for evidence of infection. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will not seek the results of these test findings. The findings of such testing will remain the sole property of the firefighter involved. However, the findings must be shared with the workers compensation and disability insurers as required by them.
   5. Exposed firefighters shall be entitled to, at the expense of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and/or Workman's Compensation Program, of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the following approved medical services.
   6. Any person who could potentially expose another firefighter or patient/victim is encouraged to report his/her condition to the fire chief for direction to appropriate counseling/action. At no time, will this disclosure affect any firefighter's status within the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
   7. Criminal charges may be sought against any person/victim who intentionally acts to expose a firefighter to a communicable disease.
4. The fire chief shall keep a record of all extraordinary incidents where potential exposure to communicable disease has occurred. Documentation of exposed firefighters shall be held in strict confidence in conformance with applicable privacy laws.

***This is a sample guideline furnished to you by VFIS. Your organization should review this guideline and make the necessary modifications to meet your organization’s needs. The intent of this guideline is to assist you in reducing exposure to the risk of injury, harm or damage to personnel, property and the general public. For additional information on this topic, contact your VFIS Risk Control representative.***

**References:**