

VI. Employee Occupational Health Programs

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A. Development Of Programs

In general a discussion of specific employee occupational health programs is beyond the scope of this manual. Specific programs must be developed based on the types of hazards, including biohazards, present in the work environment. However, the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries requires that anyone who is potentially exposed to human blood or body fluids participate in a program to reduce their risk of occupationally acquired bloodborne disease. This program is covered in detail in Section IX of this manual.

Principal Investigators whose research involves biohazards are responsible for ensuring that workers participate in appropriate immunization and/or monitoring programs.

Personnel engaged in activities involving biohazards are responsible for complying with the occupational health program defined by their principal investigator.

Campus Health Services is responsible for administering immunizations, providing follow-up after an injury, providing employee counseling, and establishing and maintaining employee medical records.

B. Guidelines For Developing Programs

These guidelines are provided to assist in the development of programs for workers employed in or assigned to a potentially biohazardous area.

1. Workers should be informed of the increased risks to persons with immune deficiency disease, receiving immunosuppressive drugs or with other debilitating diseases when working in or near a laboratory handling potentially infectious agents.

2. Workers should be informed of the risks to fetal development when working in an infectious disease laboratory.
3. Workers should be informed of the risks when working with oncogenic viruses.
4. Workers with allergies that would limit administration of immunizations or prophylactic measures after exposure incidents should be informed of the increased risk when working in a potentially biohazardous area.

C. Employee Health Programs

Employee health services are provided at the Employee Health Clinic at Hall Health (206-685-1026), Campus Health Services for UWMC staff (206-598-4848), and Employee Health Services at Harborview Medical Center (206-731-3081). Student health programs are administered through Hall Health.

D. Immunization Guidelines

Specific immunizations are required for persons who are potentially exposed to certain biological agents or in contact with certain animals. However, because of the wide range of biological agents or combinations of agents that may be present in a research institution, the exact immunizations or other measures required must be determined on an individual basis.

For information on immunization that may be required, contact the Environmental Health and Safety Occupational Health Nurse at 206-221-3025.

E. Serum Banking And Monitoring

Specific serum banking and/or monitoring programs may be required when potentially exposed to biological agents or when in contact with infectious animals.

The UW Occupational Health and Safety Section will assist the principal investigator making serum banking and/or monitoring decisions. Contact Environmental Health and Safety at 206-221-3025.

F. Employee Health And Immunization Records

Employee occupational health records including immunization records are maintained at the Employee Health Clinic at Hall Health, Employee Health Services at Harborview Medical Center, or Campus Health Services at the University of Washington Medical Center.

In addition, each principal investigator engaged in biohazardous activities should maintain records that document the requirements to work in the laboratory.

As a minimum these records should include the following for each job classification or position.

1. the specific biohazard and/or exposure determination
2. required immunizations and their frequency
3. any applicable physical limitations
4. required serum banking and/or monitoring

These records should be available for review by Environmental Health and Safety.

The Washington State Department of Labor and Industries requires that an exposure determination be made for anyone who is potentially exposed to human blood or body fluids. This exposure determination is covered in detail in Section IX of this manual.

G. Waivers

Waivers must be signed when the worker declines immunization, after being informed of the increased risks of choosing to waive the offered immunization, etc. The waiver then becomes part of the employee's health record.

The Washington State Department of Labor and Industries requires anyone who is potentially exposed to human blood or body fluids and refuses the Hepatitis B immunization to sign a declination form. See Section IX of this manual for more information on this subject.

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