Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that emergency response vehicles are maintained in a clean and sanitary condition.

Policy:

1. Definitions. For purposes of this section, the following shall apply:

   - “Blood” means human blood, human blood components, and products made from human blood.
   - “Bloodborne pathogens” means pathogenic microorganisms that are present in human blood and can cause disease in humans. These pathogens include, but are not limited to, hepatitis B virus (HBV) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)
   - "Communicable disease" is a disease which can be transmitted from one person to another by means of infectious material.
   - “Contaminated” means the presence of the reasonably anticipated presence of blood or other potentially infectious materials on an item or surface.
   - “Contaminated Laundry” means the presence or the reasonably anticipated presence of blood or other potentially infectious materials or the likelihood that they may harbor contaminated sharps.
   - “Contaminated Sharps” means any contaminated object that can penetrate the skin including, but not limited to, needles, scalpels, and broken glass.
   - “Decontamination” means the use of physical or chemical means to remove, inactivate, or destroy bloodborne pathogens on a surface or item
to the point where they are no longer capable of transmitting infectious particles and the surface or item is rendered safe for handling, use, or disposal.

- “Other Potentially Infectious Materials” means (1) The following human body fluids: semen, vaginal secretions, cerebrospinal fluid, synovial fluid, pleural fluid, pericardial fluid, peritoneal fluid, amniotic fluid, saliva, any body fluid that is visibly contaminated with blood, and all body fluids in situations where it is difficult or impossible to differentiate between body fluids; (2) Any unfixed tissue or organ (other than intact skin) from a human (living or dead)
- “Personal Protective Equipment” is specialized clothing or equipment worn by an employee for protection against a hazard. General work clothes (e.g., uniforms, pants, shirts or blouses) not intended to function as protection against a hazard are not considered to be personal protective equipment.
- “Regulated Waste” means liquid or semi-liquid blood or other potentially infectious materials; contaminated items that would release blood or other potentially infectious materials in a liquid or semi-liquid state if compressed; items that are caked with dried blood or other potentially infectious materials and are capable of releasing these materials during handling; contaminated sharps; and pathological and microbiological wastes containing blood or other potentially infectious materials.
- “Universal Precautions” is an approach to infection control. According to the concept of Universal Precautions, all human blood and certain human body fluids are treated as if known to be infectious for HIV, HBV, and other bloodborne pathogens.

2. The exterior of the vehicle will be kept clean whenever possible

- Primary response vehicles will be washed on a daily basis prior to leaving your shift at 7 a.m. or more often if needed to ensure cleanliness when possible.
- Vehicles will be dried following the washing to remove residual water
- Vehicles will receive a coating of external protectant on a regular basis

3. The patient care area will be kept clean and sanitary whenever possible

- Universal precautions shall be observed to prevent contact with blood or other potentially infectious material while decontaminating the vehicle.

4. Handling of contaminated needles and sharps

- Contaminated needles and other contaminated sharps shall not be bent, recapped, or removed except when it can be demonstrated that no alternative is feasible or that such action is required by a specific medical procedure.
• Bending, recapping or needle removal must be accomplished through the use of a mechanical device or a one-handed technique

• Contaminated sharps shall be discarded immediately or as soon as feasible in containers that are:
  • Closable;
  • Puncture resistant;
  • Leak-proof on sides and bottom; and
  • Labeled or color-coded in accordance with OSHA standard 1910.1030

• During use, containers for contaminated sharps will be:
  • Easily accessible to personnel and located as close as is feasible to the immediate area where sharps are used or can be reasonably anticipated to be found;
  • Maintained upright throughout use; and
  • Replaced routinely and not be allowed to overfill.

• Broken glassware which may be contaminated shall not be picked up directly with the hands. It shall be cleaned up using mechanical means, such as a brush and dust pan, tongs, or forceps.

5. All linen that came in contact with the patient shall be exchanged or properly cleaned prior to reuse.

  • Contaminated laundry shall be handled as little as possible with minimum of agitation.
  • Contaminated laundry shall be bagged or containerized at the location where it was used and shall not be sorted or rinsed in the location of use.
  • Contaminated laundry shall be placed and transported in bags or containers labeled or color-coded in accordance with OSHA standard 1910.1030.
  • Whenever contaminated laundry is wet and presents a reasonable likelihood of soak-through of or leakage from the bag or container, the laundry shall be placed and transported in bags or containers which prevent soak-through and/or leakage of fluids to the exterior.
  • All persons who have contact with contaminated laundry wear protective gloves and other appropriate personal protective equipment.

6. All surfaces that came into contact with blood or potentially infectious materials, including airborne materials, shall be properly decontaminated as soon as feasible.

  • Extreme caution shall be taken while cleaning non-readily visible areas to avoid personal injury
7. All equipment and working surfaces that could have become contaminated shall be cleaned and checked routinely and shall be decontaminated as necessary.

8. All coverings used for protecting working surfaces shall be removed and replaced as soon as possible after they have been contaminated.

9. All bins, pails, cans, and similar reusable receptacles must be decontaminated on a regularly scheduled basis and cleaned and decontaminated immediately or as soon as possible after visible contamination.

10. Excessively contaminated vehicles or equipment shall be removed from service until such time that they can be adequately decontaminated.

11. Vehicles and equipment will undergo a thorough decontamination on a daily basis.