



Policy Title

Workplace Exposure to Blood Borne Pathogens and Infections

Identifier

USCSOMG – STAF – 7.03

Prepared by: Office for Student Affairs	
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LCME Standards

12.8 – Student Exposure Policies/Procedures

Scope

University of South Carolina (USC) School of Medicine Greenville (SOMG) students and visiting students.

Policy Statement

It is the policy of USC SOMG to maintain a safe healthcare environment for patients, students, and staff. Students caring for patients experience an increased risk of exposure to several infectious diseases, including Hepatitis-B (Hep B), Hepatitis-C (Hep C), and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). USC SOMG and the partner health system, Prisma Health, implement measures to prevent transmission of infectious diseases, which may at times warrant exclusion of students from certain patient care settings or types of patient contact.

USC School of Medicine Greenville and Prisma Health do not discriminate against otherwise qualified students based upon disabilities, including students infected with HIV, Hepatitis C or Hepatitis B virus, if the individual is able to perform the essential functions of the job safely and effectively with reasonable accommodations.

Reason for Policy

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a safe healthcare environment and provide for the well-being of patients, students, and staff. The policy outlines required actions expected of all students involved in patient care to minimize the risk of transmission of infections to themselves and others and to prevent or minimize clinical disease in the event they experience significant exposure. LCME expects that a medical school has policies in place that effectively address medical students' exposure to infectious and environmental hazards.

Procedures

All USC School of Medicine Greenville students must follow the requirements and procedures as outlined by Prisma Health Employer Health: Blood and Body Fluid Exposures Policy

- Blood and body fluid exposures are to be immediately reported to the students' supervisor, and the student will complete the [Prisma Health Student Blood and Body Fluid Exposure Report](#) to facilitate obtaining source patient lab work.
- If the SOMG student is also injured or sick due to exposure, they will immediately contact CompEndium to begin a worker's compensation claim at 877-709-2667. CompEndium instructs the student on where to go for treatment and helps manage the process once the report is made. Students are advised to follow the instructions closely and stay in touch with CompEndium until the claim is complete for workers' compensation coverage. Students must complete an [Employee Injury Report](#) and fax it to CompEndium at 877-710-2667 and USC Central HR workerscomp@mailbox.sc.edu.
- If a blood and body fluid exposure occur after hours, on weekends or holidays, team members are to report immediately to the on-duty supervisor, who would then contact the Nursing Administrator on Duty (AOD).
- Report to Employer Health: Monday – Friday (7:30 a.m.–4 p.m.)
 - Upstate: 864-455-8991
 - Midlands: 803-296-4768If rotating at a non-Prisma Health facility, students follow the infection protocols of that facility and notify Prisma Employer Health for testing and follow-up.

In addition, students must follow Standard Precautions as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to prevent fluid borne infections in health care workers:

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/bbp/default.html>.

Prevention

The following actions are specifically required of students to minimize risk of transmission of infection:

- Gloves must be worn during all parts of a physical examination in which contact might be expected with the oral, genital, or rectal mucosa of a patient.
- Gloves must be worn while examining any skin rash that might be infectious (e.g., syphilis, herpes simplex, etc.)
- Gloves must be worn during all procedures that involve risk of exposure to blood or body fluids, including venipuncture, arterial puncture, and lumbar puncture.
- Gloves must be worn during any laboratory test on blood, serum, or other blood products or body fluids.
- After performing a venipuncture, the needle (and syringe) must be deposited immediately in a disposal box (available in all patient and procedure rooms).
 - DO NOT recap or remove needles by hand. Care must be taken to avoid bringing the needle near others while transferring it to the container.
 - To reduce the overall risk of a needle stick, OSHA requires the use of syringes and other “sharps” designed with safety features that permit safe recapping/closure using one-handed techniques. Students must use these safety devices while on clinical rotations and must first receive training from nurses or physicians experienced with using the device prior to using it themselves.

- Protective eye wear (such as goggles or a face shield) must be worn when participating in surgical procedures or other activities in which exposure to airborne blood or body fluids (via aerosolization or splashes) may occur.

Procedures for Care and Treatment Following Exposure to Blood or Body Fluids

Despite the best efforts to prevent blood/body fluid exposure, such exposures occasionally occur. Exposure to blood-borne pathogens occurs through direct contact with a patient's blood or body fluid via a needle or through contact with non-intact skin or the mucous membranes. If an exposure is suspected, the following steps must immediately be taken:

1. The site of the contamination must be thoroughly irrigated and washed with soap and water for 5 minutes. Exposed eyes should be flushed with water, normal saline, or eye wash for 10 minutes.

Impact on medical student learning activities

Depending on the exposure and risk, clinical restrictions on medical student learning activities will be determined by the prevailing policy of the partner health system, specifically for Prisma Health: Work Restrictions of Team Members with Potentially Infectious Conditions Policy

Infectious Disease Exposures

Mycobacterium tuberculosis (MTB) Cytomegalovirus (CMV)

- Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD)
- Varicella (chickenpox)
- Pertussis
- Neisseria meningitidis
- Scabies
- Lice
- Covid 19

Confidentiality:

It is the intent of USC SOMG and the partner health system to treat all student information and records relating to infectious and contagious diseases with strict confidentiality. Prisma Health Employer Health & Wellness records are private and HIPAA-protected and released without consent only to individuals who have an absolute “need to know” as determined by the Medical Director of Employer Health, the Hospital Epidemiologist, or the Vice President of Human Resources.

Employer Health & Wellness will notify the Office for Student Affairs in the event of a SOMG’s student exposure to blood or body fluids to allow school officials to follow up with the affected student to ensure compliance with exposure protocols.

Non-USC SOMG Visiting Students

Visiting students are to follow the procedures above in contacting Prisma Employer Health to report an exposure. They are to follow their home institution's worker compensation policy and procedure for any additional injuries or illnesses.

SOMG Students on Away Rotations

- The host institution should review their exposure policy with you prior to initiation of any coursework.
- Report the exposure to a preceptor or clinical supervisor and the course director immediately.
- Report the exposure to CompEndium using instructions from the [Workers Compensation policy](#)

Sanctions

Failure or refusal to follow Standard Precautions as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to prevent fluid borne infections in health care workers results in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Additional Contacts

Office for Student Affairs

Office for Medical Education

Prisma Health- Upstate Employer Health & Wellness Department

Prisma Health Infection Prevention & Control

CDC

Visiting Student Compensation policy

Related Information

USC School of Medicine Greenville Student Handbook

Work Policy Relating to Blood-borne Infectious Diseases: Human Resources - Upstate Prisma

Blood and Body Fluid Exposure Control Plan: Infection Prevention – Prisma Health

Prisma Health: Work Restrictions of Team Members with Potentially Infectious Conditions.

Prisma Health Infection Prevention & Control Manual

Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (OSHA)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Worker's Compensation USC SOMG STAF 9.02

History

Date of Change	Change
November 2025	Strengthened language and confirmed reporting procedure. Added Worker's compensation policy and instructions on starting a claim if exposure is also an injury.
June 2023	Updated based on Prisma Health policy regarding work restrictions.
Nov 2020	Updated based on Prisma Health policy regarding work restrictions and added appendix documents.
May 2019	Monitoring procedures were clarified. Editorial changes made due to branding updates and titles.
May 2018	Policy formalized into standardized template, LCME CQI

