

**CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ANESTHESIA PROGRAM**

POLICY ON PREVENTION OF OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS

Some facilities have a disproportionately high percentage of patients who are infected with the hepatitis or AIDS viruses. All students should be vaccinated for HBV or verified that they are otherwise immune. It is impossible to predict which patients are HIV or Hepatitis B/C positive, therefore universal precautions should be practiced at all times in all hospitals and clinics.

1. Always wear gloves and protective eyewear when dealing with patients in any location as well as the operating rooms.
2. Use needle-less techniques whenever possible.
3. Dispose of all sharps immediately in the appropriate containers.
4. Waterproof gowns are only necessary if at high risk for splashing or contamination from the operative site.
5. If a student experiences a clinically significant exposure to a patient's body fluid (e.g., needle-stick, splash into mucous membranes, or through an open wound on the skin), he/she should follow the protocol established for that location, this should be displayed on the walls or made available by the location supervisor. (Contact of a patient's blood or saliva with intact skin is not considered a significant risk). Other actions include:
 - i. Wash the area with soap, bleach, or alcohol; encourage bleeding.
 - ii. Report all incidents to the circulating nurse for documentation.
 - iii. If the patient is anesthetized and cannot give consent to be tested for HIV, a blood sample should be withdrawn and sent to the lab to be held. Consent should be obtained from the patient later for HIV testing. If that is still not possible, contact Employee Health Services who will in turn get permission from the County Health Officer.
 - iv. After any exposure contact the employee health center or nurse within hours of the exposure so that testing for HBV and HIV can be carried out.
6. The risk of conversion is about 1 in 200 from parenteral exposure to HIV positive blood, it is important to document that seroconversion followed the exposure incident.

The risk to health care workers of acquiring Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection in the routine performance of duties is quite low. Students, house officers, faculty, and staff will be expected to care for patients so infected as they would any patient suffering from other potentially communicable diseases in accordance with the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) and existing hospital policies.

Students, house officers, faculty, staff with HIV infection will be handled as any other medical problem in that restrictions on activities will be based on the advice of that individual's physician and guidelines set forth by the CDC.