

702 – INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONTROL

702.01 – Infection Control Program

1. **Scope:** This standard shall apply to all members. It was promulgated to establish a comprehensive program for preventing illness and death from occupational exposure to communicable diseases.
2. **General:** The health and welfare of each member is a universal concern. Unfortunately, exposure to communicable diseases is an occupational hazard that may occur during an emergency response or while performing routine departmental tasks. Therefore, the fire department will provide each member with the best protection available in an effort to prevent infections from occurring.
3. **Patient Contact:**
 - A. Every patient contact shall be regarded as potentially infectious and the appropriate precautions shall be taken as prescribed by SOP 702.03 – *Protective Clothing*.
 - B. No patient shall be refused proper emergency medical care on the basis of a known or suspected diagnosis of a communicable disease.
 - C. All linen used for patient transport shall be considered contaminated and shall not be washed in a station laundry facility but will instead be exchanged at the medical facility receiving the patient.
 - D. All needles and other expended medical supplies shall be properly disposed of by placing them in the ambulance' and/or medic unit's biohazard container.
 1. Place spent needles into the sharps container immediately to avoid sticking other members accidentally. Never recap a needle or stick it into a mattress, seat or pillow.
 2. Do not reuse spent needles.
 - E. Patients suspected of having an airborne communicable disease shall wear a face mask or particulate respirator during transport whenever possible and the apparatus' ventilation system shall be turned to the maximum level.
 - F. Equipment that becomes contaminated as the result of patient contact shall be removed from service, tagged and decontaminated as specified by SOP 702.02 – *Decontamination*.
4. **Immunizations:**
 - A. As a preventive measure, all members will be offered the following immunizations and screenings on an annual basis, as made available to first responders by Columbia Borough or other local medical agencies:
 - I. Hepatitis B
 - II. Flu Shot
 - III. TB Screening
 - B. A permanent record of all immunizations shall be maintained in the member's permanent personnel file.
 - C. Members are not required to be immunized, but those who decline must complete a Member's Immunization Refusal Form. This form shall be placed in each member's permanent personnel file.

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- D. On the recommendation of the department's physician, a member will also be offered other immunizations, if available, after exposure to a communicable disease. All exposures shall be recorded as prescribed by SOP 406.03 – *Exposure Reporting*.
 - E. Any member exposed to HIV may request periodic testing to monitor their status. The test results shall be recorded in the member's personnel file.
5. **General Hygiene:**
- A. Items contaminated by exposure to medical or hazardous substances shall either be decontaminated or properly disposed of. No contaminated waste shall be placed into department waste containers or dumpsters designated for normal house-hold waste.
 - B. Kitchens, restrooms, laundries and other such work areas shall not be used as decontaminations areas.
 - C. Contaminated uniforms and/or personal protective equipment and other articles of clothing shall be properly decontaminated and shall not be taken home to be laundered.
 - D. The department shall maintain Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for chemicals, cleansing and disinfecting solutions. Consult the MSDS for the recommended use of individual products.
 - E. Department buildings, apparatus and equipment shall be kept clean and orderly. A clean work environment helps reduce the spread of many common communicable diseases.
 - F. Washing the hands with soap and water is one of the most effective tools against spreading communicable diseases. Members shall wash their hands after using the bathroom, before eating, before and after handling or preparing food and any other time deemed to be appropriate.
6. **Responsibilities:**
- A. The Medical Lieutenant shall provide periodic training on infection control techniques and protective measures, as well as updates on communicable diseases as they are made available to the department.
 - B. The Medical Lieutenant shall also schedule first responder immunizations on an annual basis, when available for the department.
 - C. Officers shall be responsible for ensuring that all personnel under their command strictly adhere to the department's policies on infection control.
 - D. Each member shall be responsible for strictly adhering to the department's policies on infection control and for reporting any change in their personal health that would pose a risk to their fellow first responders or patients.

702.02 – Decontamination

1. **Scope:** This standard establishes guidelines for the decontamination of personnel and equipment. It was promulgated to:
 - A. Prevent illness or death of members who come in contact with contagious disease due to exposure to a bodily fluid or any other hazardous substance.

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- B. Establish procedures for the decontamination of humans, vehicles and non-disposable equipment that has been exposed to a bodily fluid or any other hazardous substance.

2. **General:**

- A. The blood, body fluids and tissues of all patients shall be considered potentially infectious. Portions of a vehicle, items of non-disposable equipment, areas of a caregiver's body, articles of clothing and personal protective equipment that come in contact with these substances shall be considered contaminated.
- B. Bodily fluids include saliva, sputum, gastric secretions, urine, feces, cerebrospinal fluid, breast milk, serosanguinous fluid, semen or any other drainage.
- C. A patient or member may also become contaminated by exposure to a hazardous material or substance.

3. **Decontamination Procedures:**

- A. Non-disposable equipment shall be properly decontaminated after every patient use. Any item that cannot readily be decontaminated shall be labeled as being contaminated and shall be quarantined.
- B. In most instances, the decontamination of personnel can be accomplished by simply removing contaminated gloves and other protective devices and washing the hands and other exposed body parts with soap and warm water. Disposable gloves and other disposable protective devices shall be disposed of as specified in Section 4, below.
- C. Uniforms and articles of clothing that are contaminated shall be decontaminated by Susquehanna Valley EMS (SVEMS). The contaminated articles of clothing should be removed as soon as possible. The member should shower and dress in a clean uniform. The contaminated items shall be washed by SVEMS but not be washed with other items. Under no circumstance should a contaminated item be taken home to be cleaned due to the possibility of infecting or contaminating a family member.
- D. Contaminated personal protective equipment shall be decontaminated by using the gear washer located at Columbia #1 station on Front Street, as per Columbia Borough Fireman's Relief protocol.
- E. Apparatus and non-disposable equipment shall be thoroughly washed with soap and water. In some instances, it may be necessary to use a disinfectant or a bleach solution. Always follow the manufacturer's recommendations when using a cleaning product. When decontaminating items and apparatus, be sure to wear gloves and other protective clothing as may be required.
- F. The decontamination process shall be conducted in a maintenance area designated for this process and shall not take place in the kitchen or other living areas. Exception: Restrooms may be used to shower and change clothes. Exercise caution, however, to prevent contaminating the restroom.

4. **Disposal of Contaminated Items:**

- A. Items that cannot be properly decontaminated shall be disposed of as follows:
 - I. Contaminated waste items shall be placed in a garbage bag or other container, then properly sealed and labeled as contaminated waste.

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- II. The bags of contaminated waste shall be transported to the hospital or other designated waste handler for disposal.
 - III. Contaminated waste shall not be disposed of in a dumpster or other containers designated for the disposal of normal household waste.
 - B. Reusable bins and containers used to store contaminated waste shall be inspected, cleaned and disinfected at least monthly. If the outside of the container becomes contaminated, decontaminate it immediately.
 - C. Infectious or contaminated waste shall not be stored in the kitchen or living areas of the fire station prior to disposal.
5. **Responsibilities:**
- A. It shall be the responsibility of each member to strictly adhere to the provisions in this standard.
 - B. Drivers/Chauffeurs shall clean and decontaminate their assigned vehicles and equipment as soon as practical after exposure to blood, bodily fluids or other hazardous or infectious materials.
 - C. Officers shall monitor all members under their command to ensure strict compliance with this standard.
 - D. The Medical Lieutenant shall conduct training classes periodically on decontamination procedures and shall be responsible for making recommendations for updating this standard as new practices and information become available.

702.03 – Protective Clothing

1. **Scope:** This standard shall apply to any member who comes in contact with a patient. It was promulgated to prevent the contraction of communicable diseases by prescribing appropriate preventive measures.
2. **General:**
 - A. Members who provide patient care or who are otherwise likely to be exposed to blood or other bodily fluids shall be provided protective emergency medical garments, face protection devices and gloves that meet the applicable requirements of NFPA 1999, *Standard on Protective Clothing for Emergency Medical Operations*.
 - B. Members shall wear gloves when in contact with a patient or in the presence of bodily fluids. Patient care shall not be initiated until the gloves are donned.
 - C. Each member shall don a protective emergency medical garment and face protection device prior to administering any patient care whenever large discharges of bodily fluids are likely, such as during childbirth or incidents involving spurting blood.
 - D. Gloves and other protective devices shall be disposed of after being used and they shall not be reused. For multiple-casualty incidents, use a new set of gloves for each patient whenever possible.
 - E. Contaminated medical garments, face protection devices and gloves shall be placed in a red biohazard plastic bag for proper disposal after use. The contaminated biohazard bags shall be disposed of at a hospital or other

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designated waste handler. Under no circumstances shall contaminated items be left at the scene of an incident or disposed in the station trash.

- F. Contaminated uniforms, protective clothing, non-disposable equipment and vehicles shall be cleaned and decontaminated as soon as practical. Decontamination shall always take place prior to being returned to service. Members shall clean and decontaminate the items in accordance with SOP 702.02 – *Decontamination*.
- G. SOP 405.01 – *Protective Clothing & Equipment*, will also be strictly adhered to when conditions warrant. The provisions contained within this SOP do not relieve a member of the responsibility of wearing and using the appropriate protective clothing and equipment.
- H. A member who is exposed to a hazardous material or contagious disease while delivering patient care shall report their exposure as required by SOP 406.03 – *Exposure Reporting*.

3. **Responsibilities:**

- A. The Medical Lieutenant shall issue a sufficient quantity of protective emergency medical garments, face protection devices and gloves to each company to ensure that such devices will be available for each incident for which CCFD responds.
- B. The Medical Lieutenant or Lieutenants of each apparatus shall inspect their vehicle after each emergency medical incident to ensure that sufficient quantities of protective devices are available for use by staff on each company.
- C. Each staff shall be responsible for wearing the appropriate level of protection at an emergency medical incident.
- D. Officers shall be responsible for ensuring that all staff under their command wear the appropriate level of protection at emergency medical incidents and shall immediately correct any violation that is observed.
- E. Officers shall also review each member's compliance with this standard whenever conducting a performance review and shall note any failures to comply.
- F. Junior Firefighting staff members involved in the delivery of patient care shall strictly adhere to the provisions of this standard.