



# Cooper Medical School of Rowan University

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

**SECTION:** Student Affairs  
**SUBJECT:** Infectious and Environmental Hazards Needlesticks and Bloodborne Pathogens Policy  
**ISSUE DATE:** June 25, 2015  
**REVISION DATE:** June 30, 2017; June 22, 2020; September 23, 2020, November 24, 2020  
**INITIATED BY:** Office of Student Affairs

**APPROVED BY:**

*Annette C. Reboli, M.D.*

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**Annette C. Reboli, M.D., Dean**

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**POLICY:** Infectious and Environmental Hazards, Needlesticks and Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure and Protection of Patients from Blood Borne Pathogens and other Communicable Diseases

**PURPOSE:** This policy is instituted to ensure appropriate education is facilitated to prevent, prepare and protect CMSRU students from potential infectious and environmental hazards, needlesticks and bloodborne pathogens exposure and to provide protocols to follow in the event of these exposures. It is also to protect patients from students who are infected with blood borne pathogens or other communicable diseases.

**SCOPE:** This policy applies to all CMSRU medical students and visiting students.

**DEFINITIONS:** The Cooper Learning Network (CLN) provides online training modules to students regarding safety measures surrounding environmental risks and exposure to hazards and infectious materials. Infectious materials include anything coming from someone's body other than your own (for example, blood and bodily fluids) and all lab cultures.

**PROCEDURE:** All CMSRU students receive annual training on infectious and environmental hazard methods of prevention and safety, including protocols surrounding access to care and treatment after exposure. The protocols included in this policy must be followed whenever there is the potential for exposure. Students are expected to comply with recommended infection prevention precautions and procedures at the point of patient care at each clinical site.

1. Each student is responsible for their own safety throughout their education at CMSRU.
  - a. CMSRU will provide students with education and information regarding appropriate policies and procedures to follow to protect themselves during their educational experience and when they are potentially exposed to blood-borne pathogens, communicable diseases, and other environmental hazards. CMSRU students are expected to comply with all infection prevention policies and procedures.

2. Education and Training

- a. All students receive annual online training surrounding infection prevention and procedures to follow in the event of an exposure.
- b. All students receive annual Occupational Safety and Health Administration online training and education regarding needle sticks, sharps, and body fluid procedures and the prevention of blood-borne pathogen transmission.
- c. All students receive annual hazard communication online training with respect to environmental hazards and appropriate protective measures.
- d. All students receive annual online safety instruction to better protect patients, members of the healthcare team and themselves in the clinical environment.
- e. Prior to their first clinical experience, students receive online and in-person instruction regarding the prevention and understanding of all infectious diseases they may encounter in a clinical setting.
- f. An exposures checklist (laminated card) detailing the steps to follow in the event of an exposure is provided to all CMSRU students.

3. Standard Precautions

- a. Consider blood, body fluids and tissue from ALL PATIENTS to be potentially infectious.
- b. Perform hand hygiene before/after all patient contacts.
- c. Wear gloves when exposure to blood and body fluids may occur, *e.g.*, during phlebotomy. Change your gloves and perform hand hygiene after each procedure and before contact with another patient.
- d. Wear a gown, mask and goggles when blood or body fluids splashes may occur (*e.g.* during surgery, placing nasogastric tubes, *etc.*).
- e. Report immediately all incidents of blood and body fluid exposure of the following types:  
Parenteral: needle stick, puncture or cut.  
Mucous membrane: splash to eyes, nose, mouth.  
Cutaneous: contact with blood and body fluids on ungloved hands or other skin surfaces that may be cut, chapped, abraded, or affected by active dermatitis.

4. Immediate Response-Time Matters!

- a. Clean wounds or punctures with soap and water.
- b. Flush mucous membranes or skin copiously with water or saline.
- c. DO NOT “force bleed” the wound.
- d. DO NOT apply caustics (*e.g.* bleach, organic solvents, hard surface disinfectants, *etc.*)
- e. When HIV post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is indicated, early treatment (within hours) is recommended.
- f. Proceed Directly to Worknet Occupational Health Services or the Cooper University Health Care Emergency Department (CUHC ED)  
Please proceed directly to Worknet Occupational Health Services (856-338-0350) as soon as possible and identify yourself as a CMSRU student. Worknet is located at 300 Broadway, Suite #101, Camden, NJ, located across the street from the MEB. Worknet hours of operation are Monday-Friday, 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM. If the exposure occurs outside of Worknet’s hours of operation, please go directly to the Emergency Department at CUHC. \*Due to COVID-19, Worknet is operating under the adjusted office hours of 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

5. After First Aid

- a. Notify the staff and supervising resident and/attending physician and the Office of Student Affairs.
- b. Carefully note the type of exposure, type of fluid/tissue involved and appropriate information about the source patient. (risk factors, lab data)
- c. Blood tests will be performed as appropriate.

- d. Worknet will provide a schedule for follow up counseling and treatment, as necessary.
- e. All initial costs of laboratory tests for properly reported occupational exposures or injuries are covered by CUHC.
- f. Treatment required post-exposure or for a clinical condition that develops as a result of the exposure or injury should be covered by the student's health insurance policy.
- g. If a student is unsure whether they should participate in patient care, the student should contact the Student Health Center or their treating PCP or specialist.

#### 6. Learning Environment

- a. Students who are potentially exposed to a patient with a communicable illness (e.g. meningitis, hepatitis, HIV) are to be evaluated by Worknet or the CUHC ED, offered preventive medication if indicated, and monitored for the development of illness by Worknet.
- b. If a student has infection with a blood borne pathogen they are required to confidentially discuss the matter with the director of student health services. The goals are to protect infected students from discrimination, protect student confidentiality, and protect patients during exposure prone procedures. The director will assess risk to patients, educate the student about their condition, review practices, and provide clinical care if the student doesn't want care from their own physician. The director may consult an ad hoc committee including an advisory dean, the director or a designee from Worknet, an infectious disease expert on the relevant pathogen, and a course director for whose course the student may have restricted activities. The student may request participation from the physician overseeing their care. The committee may recommend the student should not be in the clinical setting due to risk to self/patients/coworkers, can be in the clinical setting with limited activities, or can be in the clinical setting without restrictions. The committee may require a fitness for duty assessment prior to rendering a recommendation. They may make recommendations about specific accommodations. All recommendations will be made to the disability services provider.
- c. In order to allow a student to return to the clinical setting following contraction of a communicable disease or disability due to an exposure, the ad hoc committee will make its recommendation based on the safety of all involved. If the disease or disability of the student can be accommodated, the student should apply to disability services to request appropriate accommodations. If approved, the accommodations would be reviewed and implemented by the Office of Medical Education. All information will be strictly confidential.
- d. CMSRU is dedicated to ensuring that students with chronic conditions are not discriminated against and can continue in the educational program, despite the presence of a chronic condition, if at all possible with or without accommodations.

#### 7. Visiting Students

- a. All students completing an away elective at CMSRU are required to complete OSHA training or comparable environmental hazard training from their home institution.
- b. In the event of an exposure, Visiting Students follow the same protocol as outlined in this policy and should be directed to the Office of Student Affairs at [studentaffairs@coopermed.rowan.edu](mailto:studentaffairs@coopermed.rowan.edu)
- c. Visiting students are informed of this policy by email prior to commencing their rotations at CMSRU. In addition, the policy is included the CMSRU Visiting Student Webpage and uploaded to the VSAS/VSLO website. As part of the VSLO application process for visiting students who request rotations at Cooper University Health Care, (CUHC) students must sign and attest they have read, understood and will abide by the Infectious and Environmental Hazards, Needlesticks and Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Policy.
- d. An exposures checklist (laminated card) detailing the steps to follow in the event of an exposure is provided to all visiting students.

Please also refer to the Student Healthcare Services Policy

**REFERENCES:**

29 CFR 1910 Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens; Needlestick and Other Sharps Injuries

[http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show\\_document?p\\_table=FEDERAL\\_REGISTER&p\\_id=16265](http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=FEDERAL_REGISTER&p_id=16265)

29 CFR 1910.1200 Hazard Communication

[http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show\\_document?p\\_table=STANDARDS&p\\_id=10099](http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=STANDARDS&p_id=10099)