

## Heartsaver® Bloodborne Pathogens Frequently Asked Questions

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### **What types of surface disinfectants can I use on non-porous surfaces?**

The OSHA Standard states that EPA-registered tuberculocidal disinfectants are appropriate for cleaning up blood or blood-containing materials. Some disinfectants take time to work. Be sure to read the label and follow the directions.

Alternately you may use a solution of household bleach that has been diluted with water to clean non-porous surfaces such as concrete, plastic and hard floors. Use approximately 1 ½ ounces of bleach for every one gallon of water (1:100) or approximately 13 ounces of bleach for every gallon of water (1:10). Cover the exposed surface area with the solution and let soak for at least 15 minutes. Then wipe the area with a cloth soaked with bleach solution. Be sure to wear personal protective equipment and follow your company's safety procedures when handling bleach.

Note: According to the Centers for Disease Control, bleach solutions must be prepared daily. They lose their strength after 24 hours.

For additional information, refer to the [Use of Bleach in Prevention of Transmission of HIV in Health Care Settings](#).

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### **What does OSHA currently accept as "appropriate" disinfectants to prevent the spread of HIV and the Hepatitis B virus (HBV)?**

EPA-registered disinfectants for HIV and HBV are appropriate disinfectants to clean contaminated surfaces, as long as you follow the instructions on the label.

1. Clean up all blood thoroughly before applying the disinfectant.
2. Keep the surface wet with the disinfectant for 30 seconds for HIV and 10 minutes for the Hepatitis B virus.

**Reference Interpretation and Compliance Letters:**

- [OSHA's policy regarding the use of EPA-registered disinfectants.](#) [7/15/99]
  - [Disinfectants claiming efficacy against the Hepatitis B virus.](#) [4/1/97]
  - [EPA-Registered disinfectants for HIV/HBV.](#) [2/28/97]
  - See also: [lists of EPA-registered products](#) and [FDA-Cleared Sterilants and High Level Disinfectants](#)
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**What do I do if I don't have access to soap and water?**

You can use waterless hand sanitizer to clean your hands after an exposure or after removing your gloves. Be sure to wash with large amounts of soap and water as soon as you are able.

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**Who is responsible for providing personal protective equipment (PPE)?**

The employer is financially responsible for providing PPE for employees, as well as repairing, replacing, cleaning and disposing of PPE.

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**Do I have to remove PPE before leaving the work area?**

Yes, OSHA requires that you remove PPE before leaving the work area. Follow your company's exposure control plan for disposing of or cleaning used PPE.

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**What kind of eye protection should I wear?**

If there is a reasonable chance of being around splashes or sprays of blood, you should wear a mask in combination with eye protection such as goggles, glasses with solid side shields, or chin-length face shields.

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**What happens to biohazardous waste once I dispose of it?**

Your employer is responsible for arranging for the disposal of biohazardous waste. Some items with biohazardous waste may be cleaned, such as PPE. Other biohazardous waste is burned or otherwise destroyed by an authorized waste disposal company. Your employer may have more information about how biohazardous waste collected at your company is handled.

**When should employees be offered the hepatitis B vaccine?**

Employers must offer the hepatitis B vaccine to employees with a reasonable chance of exposure within 10 working days of initial assignment to that job. Employees must receive training on bloodborne pathogens, including the hepatitis B vaccine, before receiving the vaccine.

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**Can an employee refuse the hepatitis B vaccine?**

Yes. It is important that the employee be informed of the benefits of the vaccine through training before making this decision. If an employee does refuse the vaccine, he or she can opt to take the vaccine at a later date.

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