



**WEST VIRGINIA SECONDARY SCHOOL ACTIVITIES COMMISSION
2875 STAUNTON TURNPIKE, PARKERSBURG, WV 26104**

BODY FLUID HANDLING PROCEDURES

PURPOSE

The West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission has adopted this policy in an effort to minimize the possibility of transmission of any infectious disease during a high school athletic practice or contest. The policy primarily addresses blood-borne pathogens such as Hepatitis B virus and the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). However, it also discusses common-sense precautions against the spread of less serious contagions such as the Influenza virus and the Common Cold virus. Much of this policy has been written with contact sports such as football, wrestling, and basketball in mind. However, it is applicable for all sports.

BLOOD-BORNE PATHOGENS

Blood-Borne pathogens such as Hepatitis B and HIV are serious infectious diseases which are present in blood as well as other bodily fluids; such as semen, vaginal secretions and breast milk. While there are a number of other such blood-borne diseases, Hepatitis B and HIV are the most commonly known.

Hepatitis B is a virus which results in a dangerous inflammation of the liver. Its victims suffer long-term consequences and reoccurrences, and the disease can be deadly if not treated. HIV is the virus that causes Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), which weakens the immune system, thus making a person susceptible to infections their immune systems would normally fight off.

The precise risk of HIV transmission during exposure of open wounds or mucous membranes such as the eyes, ears, nose, and mouth to contaminated blood is not known. However, evidence would suggest it is extremely low. In fact, the possibility of contracting HIV in this manner is much less than the possibility of contracting Hepatitis B and other blood-borne viral infections.

Therefore, student athletes, coaches, and officials must understand that while it is possible for HIV to be transmitted by blood from one individual to another through an open wound or a mucous membrane, the probability is very low. However, since the chance of this occurring is not zero, the appropriate precautions should be taken to ensure no transmission can occur.

PRECAUTIONS AGAINST TRANSMISSION OF BLOOD-BORNE PATHOGENS

The proper handling of body fluid spills should be a concern of teachers, coaches, officials, and student athletes. All concerned individuals must be aware that any time there is blood and/or other body fluids present, there is the possibility of an infectious disease being present. However this possibility can be nearly eliminated if the following precautions are observed.

General Procedures:

- 1) Wear latex or vinyl disposable exam gloves before making contact with body fluids during care, treatment, and cleaning procedures.
- 2) Discard gloves after each use.
- 3) Wash hands after handling any body fluids, whether or not gloves are worn.
- 4) Discard disposal items in plastic lined containers with lids. Close bags and discard daily.
- 5) Do not reuse plastic bags.
- 6) Use disposable items to handle body fluids whenever possible.
- 7) Use paper towels to pick up and discard any solid waste materials such as vomitus and feces.

Procedures for Activities:

- 1) All athletes must cover any open wound.
- 2) Student athletes should treat and cover their own wounds whenever possible.
- 3) When administering first aid, disposable rubber gloves should be worn. A different pair of gloves should be worn for each treatment administered.
- 4) If an individual gets someone else's blood on his/her skin, the area should be washed with soap and water and wipe the area with disinfectant, such as isopropyl alcohol.
- 5) If a student athlete begins to bleed during activity, play must be stopped, the student athlete who is injured removed, and any potentially contaminated surfaces cleaned using a disinfectant. The surface should be wiped with clean water.
- 6) Any student athlete that is removed must have the wound covered and the bleeding stopped, prior to returning to contest.
- 7) Any individual who has treated a wound or cleaned a contaminated surface should wash his/her hands with soap and warm water.
- 8) A student athlete should take a shower using a liberal amount of soap and warm water following the contest.
- 9) Towels, which are used by athletes, coaches, or officials should not be used to clean off any potentially contaminated surfaces.
- 10) All soiled linens such as towels and uniforms should be washed in hot water and in a detergent containing bleach, if possible.
- 11) If a coach or an official gets blood on them they should first wash the area with warm water and soap, and then wipe the area with a disinfectant such as isopropyl alcohol.
- 12) All coaches, athletes, and officials should practice good hygiene. Towels, cups, and water bottles should not be shared.
- 13) Keeping locker rooms and other areas well ventilated and clean can also help in preventing other air-borne contagions from being transmitted.

REFERENCES

St. Joseph's Hospital, Sports Medicine Staff, Parkersburg, WV.
West Virginia Chapter of the American Academy of Family Physicians, Sports Medicine Committee.
"Blood-Borne Pathogens in the Health Care of the Athlete," The First Aider, Fall 1992, Vol. 62, No.1.
"Infectious Disease Policy of the Florida High School Activities Association." 8-8-92.
"Routine for Handling Body Fluids," Michigan High School Association.

Policy Adopted by the Board of Directors