

DALTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

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<i>Subject</i> Blood Borne Pathogens and Other Infectious Diseases			
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I. Policy

It is the policy of the Dalton Police Department to provide guidelines to decrease the risk to personnel who come in contact with persons who have infectious diseases, such as Acquired Immune Deficiency syndrome (AIDS) and hepatitis. Officers should assume that all persons are potential carriers of these diseases and that exposure to blood or bodily fluids increases the risk of infection.

II. Procedure

A. Exposure Prevention

1. All personnel shall treat the blood and / or bodily fluids of all persons as potentially infectious.
2. Protective disposable gloves (nitrile, latex, etc.) shall be used to keep blood and other fluids off the skin where violence or an altercation is likely. It is recommended that Officers wear puncture resistant gloves over disposable gloves for additional protection.
3. Extreme caution should be used during the search of suspected drug users or dealers to prevent accidental skin punctures by needles. Extreme caution must also be used when reaching into areas that are not visible, such as under car seats.
4. If available, the Officer should use alcohol wipes or hand sanitizer to reduce the risk of contamination. Officers should thoroughly wash their hands with soap and water as soon as possible following contact with any blood or bodily fluids.

B. Custody Procedures

1. Whenever it is necessary to transport a subject who has blood or other body fluids on their person, the Officer shall:
 - a. Not transport any other arrestee at the same time, if possible.

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- b. Notify any persons who may have contact with the subject of the potential contamination and presence of a contagious disease.
 - c. Include in the incident report any voluntary admittance of contagious diseases and / or the presence of body fluid.
 - 2. When a subject needs to be transported to the hospital, the Officer shall:
 - a. Request EMS personnel through the Whitfield County 911 Center, unless immediate transportation is required.
 - b. Advise EMS personnel of any information concerning the presence of contagious diseases.
- C. Decontamination of Police Vehicles
 - 1. Disinfection procedures shall be implemented as soon as possible after the detection of blood or other bodily fluid discharges within or upon a Department vehicle.
 - 2. A Supervisor shall be notified and the vehicle taken or towed to the Police Services Center, as soon as possible.
 - 3. Recommended disinfection procedures are as follows:
 - a. Affected vehicles, which cannot be easily disinfected, shall be immediately designated by the posting of an "Infectious Disease Contamination" sign, while awaiting disinfection. Signs will be available at the Police Services Center in the oil locker.
 - b. Protective disposable gloves shall be worn during all phases of disinfection. Officers and maintenance personnel should be aware that rings, jewelry, or long fingernails may compromise the structural integrity of the gloves. Gloves shall be inspected for tears and punctures prior to maintenance.
 - c. Protective disposable gloves shall be worn to wipe up any excess of blood or body fluids with disposable absorbent materials. The area should then be cleansed with soap or detergent and water. To disinfect the area, it should then be cleansed with a 1:10 dilution of household bleach and water and allowed to air dry for ten minutes.
 - d. All disposable contaminated cleaning items / gloves and the "Infectious Disease Contamination" sign shall be placed in red leak-proof plastic bags. The bags shall then be properly disposed of. The Officer should then thoroughly wash his / her hands with soap and water.

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- e. Maintenance personnel and Officers shall be careful not to contaminate themselves during this cleanup regimen or when taking off their protective disposable gloves.

D. Handling and Storage of Property and Evidence

1. Any item containing any bodily fluid(s), suspected bodily fluids, or contaminated with any contagious disease shall be handled with gloves and treated as a bio-hazard.
 - a. If the stain or sample is dry, the item should be placed in a paper bag. A proper evidence tag, evidence processing request, and special label shall be affixed to the outside of the package.
 - b. Any clothing or evidence known to be contaminated with suspected AIDS, Hepatitis B, or other contagious diseases shall be clearly labeled. The label shall indicate: "BIOHAZARD".
2. If the evidence consists of a syringe and / or needle, it shall be photographed and disposed of in a designated sharps container. The photograph shall be retained as evidence.
 - a. In the most serious cases, if the needle / syringe is to be processed for latent fingerprints, the syringe should be entered into evidence in a manner as to preserve the integrity of potential latent prints while also ensuring the safety of all persons that may come in contact with the item.
 - b. Liquid samples from a syringe should be transferred to a leak-proof container designed to store such liquids and shall be treated as a biohazard.
 - c. Any syringe that is disposed of must be placed in a properly approved biohazard container.
3. Employees should always wash thoroughly with soap and water and / or a germicidal hand wash after handling any item suspected of being contaminated with blood or other bodily fluids. This should occur even if gloves were worn during the contact.
4. Persons working in areas where blood or other bodily fluids have been shed (for example, crime scene personnel working for protracted periods of time at homicide scenes) should wear anti-contamination clothing, such as suits, masks, boot covers, and gloves.
5. Property and Evidence Technicians (PETs) shall adhere to a precise process when handling, processing, and storing potentially infectious disease-contaminated property and / or evidence.

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- a. Any clothing or other evidence known to be contaminated with suspected AIDS, Hepatitis B, or other contagious diseases shall be clearly labeled. The label shall indicate: "BIOHAZARD".
- b. All bloody clothing shall be treated as if it is contaminated.
- c. All bloody clothing or other evidence and the packaging containing the items shall be handled with protective disposable gloves.
- d. PETs shall furnish protective disposable gloves to Officers, Investigators, District Attorney office personnel, or others handling bloody clothing while in the Property and Evidence Section.
- e. Any clothing known or suspected to be contaminated with any contagious disease or bodily fluid shall only be handled by PETs wearing proper protective equipment.
- f. PETs shall wash their hands thoroughly with soap after handling any possibly contaminated item.
- g. All contaminated property marked for disposal shall be kept in sealed plastic bags and placed in an infectious disease receptacle in the Property and Evidence Section until transported for destruction.

E. Property Contamination

- 1. When Department-issued or personal property is contaminated by blood or bodily fluids in the line of duty, employees shall properly disinfect the items before continued use.
- 2. If it is determined that the item cannot be disinfected, it shall be disposed of in accordance with the procedure set forth for contaminated items. The employee shall be responsible for submitting an equipment replacement form to his / her immediate Supervisor requesting the equipment be replaced.
- 3. The equipment replacement request shall include:
 - a. The circumstance by which the property became contaminated
 - b. The name of the Supervisor who confirmed that disinfection procedures were not practical or not effective
 - c. Whether any person was charged with destruction of public or private property due to the circumstance by which it became contaminated

F. Line of Duty Exposure to Infectious Diseases or Contaminated Materials

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1. Documentation shall be prepared when employees have cause to believe they have had high-risk exposure during line of duty activities.
2. Examples of high-risk exposure include:
 - a. The handling of bloody or wet items, where scratches, cuts, or open sores are noticed on the area of contact.
 - b. Direct contact with bodily fluids from a subject on an area where there is an open sore or cut.
 - c. Direct mouth-to-mouth resuscitation (CPR).
 - d. The receiving of a cut or puncture wound as a result of searching a person or property.
3. A Supervisor shall be contacted, and a workers' compensation form WC-1, Employer's First Report of Injury or Occupational Disease, shall be initiated.
4. Employees shall be evaluated clinically and serologically for evidence of infection after the exposure. This shall be performed by one of the physicians listed on the City of Dalton's panel of physicians or the emergency room at Hamilton Medical Center.

III. **Supplies**

- A. Watch Commanders shall ensure that adequate supplies are available for infectious disease control within their respective shift.
- B. Personal protection equipment, along with cleaning and disposal supplies consistent with OSHA standards, shall be provided through the Division Commanders and / or the Property and Evidence Section.
- C. Division Operations Supervisors shall be responsible for the inventory and dissemination of supplies for infectious disease control. They shall also initiate reordering procedures before supplies become depleted.

IV. **General Guidelines**

- A. Discretion should be used by all employees to limit the exposure to contagious diseases.
- B. Officers shall not eat or drink at crime scenes where bodily fluids are present or other contagious factors exist.
- C. Employees should be aware that certain prescribed medications, such as steroids or asthma medication, may suppress their immune system and make them more susceptible to infectious diseases. Employees should consult their private physician if they are taking prescription drugs.

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- D. Employees that are pregnant should be advised to report to their physician any direct contacts with bodily fluids in the line of duty.
- E. Employees should always wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water and or germicidal hand wash after contacting any item suspected of being contaminated with blood or other bodily fluids. This should occur even if gloves were worn during the contact.

This policy supersedes any previous policies issued.

BY ORDER OF

CHIEF OF POLICE

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