

Cleaning up body fluids

****This sheet describes good practice for clearing up body fluids - vomit, faeces etc. It covers the key points you need to follow to help reduce exposure to an acceptable level, as part of your COSHH assessment****

Hazards

- ▶ Body fluids are a source of infectious micro-organisms (bacteria, viruses and fungi).
- ▶ The main risk is infection following hand to mouth/nose/eye contact.
- ▶ There is also a risk of infection via broken skin (cuts or scratches).
- ▶ Cleaning products may contain hazardous substances such as biocides and surfactants.
- ▶ Health effects from cleaning products include irritation, dermatitis and breathing problems.

Access / storage

- ▶ Erect barriers and notices.
- ▶ Store cleaning products and materials in a designated area.

Equipment and procedures

Control equipment

- ▶ Provide dedicated cleaning equipment - body fluid spill kits or chlorine releasing disinfectant is suitable, e.g. hypochlorite solution.
- ▶ Provide closeable containers and bags labelled "clinical waste".
- ▶ Provide buckets with disinfectant and long-handled brushes for personal decontamination at the exit point.

Control procedures

- ▶ Ensure a good standard of general ventilation.
- ▶ Scrape up residues into the closeable container, for safe disposal.
- ▶ Bag up contaminated material that needs laundry or disposal, e.g. bedding, clothing.
- ▶ Wash surfaces clean with detergent before disinfecting.
- ▶ Heavily fouled soft furnishings may need bagging for disposal as clinical waste.

First aid

- ▶ Provide sterile wipes and clean water to cleanse wounds.
- ▶ Keep a supply of sterile adhesive waterproof dressings nearby.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- ▶ Respiratory protective equipment (RPE) is not needed.

Other protective equipment

- ▶ Provide eye protection, a disposable plastic apron, waterproof abrasion-resistant gloves e.g. nitrile.
- ▶ Ensure that all cuts and abrasions are covered with a waterproof dressing before work begins.

What this guidance covers:

- ▶ hazards
- ▶ access/storage
- ▶ equipment and procedures
- ▶ cleaning and housekeeping
- ▶ health surveillance
- ▶ training and supervision



Cleaning and housekeeping

Decontamination

- ▶ Assume that everything that might be contacted by body fluids is contaminated.
- ▶ Clean and disinfect the area after the task.
- ▶ Ensure there is a system to decontaminate PPE and work clothing - minimise the spread of contamination.
- ▶ Change out of work clothing before exiting the area.
- ▶ Provide bags labelled "clinical waste - biohazard" for all contaminated PPE.
- ▶ Disinfect or sterilise reusable work equipment.
- ▶ Ensure that waste from the cleaning of body fluids is disposed of safely according to local rules and regulations.
- ▶ Caution: if soiled, bag up work clothes for laundry as a separate load.

Personal decontamination and skin care

- ▶ Wash before eating or drinking and after touching any surface or object that might be contaminated.
- ▶ Provide warm water, mild skin cleansers, nailbrushes, and soft paper, fabric towels or hot air for drying. Avoid abrasive cleaners.
- ▶ Instruct workers in how to clean their skin effectively.
- ▶ Provide pre-work skin creams, which will make it easier to wash dirt from the skin and after-work creams to replace skin oils.
- ▶ Caution: "barrier creams" or "liquid gloves" do not provide a full barrier.

Health surveillance

- ▶ Conduct skin checks for dermatitis.
- ▶ Keep good records of gastric upsets - monitor that personal hygiene is adequate.
- ▶ Where appropriate, make available effective vaccines for those workers at risk of repeated exposure to body fluids.

Training and supervision

- ▶ Provide supervision - ensure that safe work procedures are followed.
- ▶ Tell workers, including maintenance workers, what the hazards and risks are.
- ▶ Explain the early signs of dermatitis.
- ▶ Training includes toolbox talks on:
 - How to use the right safe working procedures
 - Checking for damage
 - Personal hygiene
 - How to decontaminate effectively, and
 - What to do if something goes wrong
- ▶ Involve managers and supervisors in health and safety training

Employee checklist

- Are you clear about the procedures for doing the job?
- Clean up leaks and spills immediately.
- Look for signs of wear and damage to equipment.
- If you find any problem, get it fixed. Don't just carry on working.
- Report all illnesses to your supervisor.
- Use, look after and store your PPE in accordance with instructions.
- Wash hands before eating, drinking or using the lavatory.

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