REDUCING THE RISK OF EXPOSURE TO INFECTIOUS DISEASES
MONTHLY HEALTH AND SAFETY TALKS

Section 25(2)(a) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) requires employers to provide information, instruction and supervision to workers to protect their health and safety.
INFECTIOUS DISEASE

This Safety Talk focuses on safe work practices to reduce the risk of exposure to Infectious Diseases
Infectious Disease

A disease due to a specific microbial agent or its toxic products that can be transmitted from an infected person, animal, plant or inanimate source e.g. water, food, soil etc. to a susceptible host.
INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONTROL

Toronto Public Health and many City divisions have a strong partnership and have worked together to develop and implement effective infection prevention and control plans to keep everyone healthy.
The Toronto Public Health website is an excellent resource for staff on dealing with infectious diseases, outbreaks and prevention.

Relevant information is also communicated to Divisions via e-mail when an outbreak occurs or during high risk periods.

www.toronto.ca/health
Policies & Procedures

- The City has identified potential exposure to infectious diseases as an occupational hazard in City workplaces.
- A policy to protect employees from exposure to infectious diseases is in place.
- Divisions that identify infectious disease hazards must develop a program and/or procedures to address these hazards.
Policies & Procedures

- Infectious Disease/Infectious Agent Policy at [http://wi.toronto.ca/intra/hr/policies.nsf/9fff29b7237299b385256729004b844b/5d5a1854fa571c0e85257980004ef55f?OpenDocument](http://wi.toronto.ca/intra/hr/policies.nsf/9fff29b7237299b385256729004b844b/5d5a1854fa571c0e85257980004ef55f?OpenDocument)

- Infectious Disease/Agent Program Guidelines at [http://wi.toronto.ca/intra/hr/policies.nsf/9fff29b7237299b385256729004b844b/fb20e3f3fc1ae38085257981005b2414?OpenDocument](http://wi.toronto.ca/intra/hr/policies.nsf/9fff29b7237299b385256729004b844b/fb20e3f3fc1ae38085257981005b2414?OpenDocument)

- Infectious Disease/Agent Risk Assessment Tool at [http://wi.toronto.ca/intra/hr/policies.nsf/94fe352fa625017f852567440047a81b/FB20E3F3FC1AE38085257981005B2414/$file/Infectious%20Disease%20Risk%20Assessment.pdf](http://wi.toronto.ca/intra/hr/policies.nsf/94fe352fa625017f852567440047a81b/FB20E3F3FC1AE38085257981005B2414/$file/Infectious%20Disease%20Risk%20Assessment.pdf)
Examples of Infectious Diseases

- Chicken Pox
- Measles
- Meningitis
- West Nile Virus
- Influenza
- Norovirus and Norwalk-like Virus
- Tuberculosis
STATISTICS

In 2011, within the City, there was a total of 31 WSIB-approved lost time injury claims and 73 approved medical aid claims related to infectious disease exposure.
TRANSMISSION - GETTING AROUND

Direct
Indirect

CONTACT

<2 metres
Droplet

VECTORBORNE

VEHICLE

> 1 metre

AIRBORNE
INFECTIONOUS AGENTS CAN BE SPREAD IN A VARIETY OF WAYS, INCLUDING:

- **Droplet** - pathogens may be released in droplet form, which can result in transmission by contact with contaminated surfaces or by direct contact.

- **Airborne** - pathogens may be released in aerosol form, which can result in transmission by inhalation.

- **Contaminated objects or food** - pathogens may be spread to food or other objects, if hands are dirty.

- **Skin-to-skin contact** - the transfer of some pathogens can occur through touch, or by sharing personal items, clothing or objects.

- **Contact with body fluids** - pathogens in saliva, urine, faeces or blood can be passed to another person's body via cuts or abrasions, or through the mucus membranes of the mouth and eyes.
CONTRIBUTORS TO INFECTIOUS DISEASE TRANSMISSION

- Poor hand hygiene practices
- Coughing and sneezing (mucous droplets)
- Exposure to body fluids and undiagnosed rashes with non-intact skin
- Improper use of PPE
HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF?
Risk Assessment

- Staff must assess the risk of exposure to blood, body fluids and non-intact skin and identify the strategies that will decrease exposure risk and prevent the transmission of infectious agents.
- Done before each interaction with a client or their environment.
PROTECT YOURSELF

- Follow safe work procedures, including hand hygiene
- Use information obtained in education and training sessions
- Increase frequency of cleaning of high-touch surfaces
- Get an annual flu shot
- Frequently clean and sanitize personal work surfaces
- Seek immediate first aid and medical attention after an occupational exposure
- Report exposure incidents to supervisors or managers
- Report incidents of occupationally acquired illness
STAY HEALTHY

Keep your body’s own immune system in good shape by:

- Getting enough sleep
- Exercising
- Eating a well-balanced diet
- Knowing your immunization status
CLEAN HANDS FREQUENTLY

When your hand touches surfaces, such as a doorknob, keyboard, phone or filing cabinet, infectious agents may be spread.
DEVELOP GOOD HAND HYGIENE PRACTICES

- Hands are considered to be the most common method of transmitting infectious disease in the workplace.
- Clean hands before eating, after blowing nose and using the toilet.
- Refer to TPH Hand Hygiene posters.
HAND WASHING
COVER YOUR COUGH!

No tissue?
Do the Sleeve Sneeze.
- Cough or sneeze into your sleeve
- Keep your hands clean
- Stop the spread of GERMS

Cover Your Cough

Stop the Spread of Germs

Always Cover Your Cough
COVER YOUR COUGH!

- To minimize the spread of germs, cough and sneeze into the fabric of your clothing in the elbow area.
- Or use a tissue and discard the tissue immediately.
- Clean your hands after handling tissues.
TISSUE DISPOSAL

Remember to toss out your tissues so other people are not exposed.
“If it’s wet and it’s not yours, don’t touch it.”
PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING

- If you start to feel unwell, keep some distance between you and the next person.
- Avoid close contact with persons who are sick.
KEEP YOUR DISTANCE

Stay home if you are ill to avoid infecting others.
ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANING

- Viruses and bacteria can live for two hours or longer on hard surfaces – possibly up to 48 hours.

- The influenza virus is easily inactivated by common household cleaning products.

- Surfaces that are frequently touched should be cleaned often.
REPORTING

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the City must report an occupational illness (i.e., when a worker reports symptoms that are attributed to a work related exposure) within 4 days of learning of the illness to the MOL, JHSC and the union.
REPORTING (Cont’d)

- Staff are to contact their medical practitioner, if appropriate.
- Staff and Supervisor are to complete a WSI claim form to be submitted to H&S Consultant.
- A copy of form is to be kept in the employee file.
REPORTING PROCEDURES

Immediately inform your Supervisor of any infectious disease hazards/risks in the workplace or any work related illnesses so that appropriate action can be taken.
Timely reporting of communicable/infectious diseases is essential for their control. Notify public health of any suspected reportable diseases or outbreaks.

Call 311
TORONTO HEALTH CONNECTION

Confidential Health Information and advice is available from a Public Health Professional – Monday to Friday 8:30 to 4:30

Call 311
STAY INFORMED, BE PREPARED

Toronto Public Health (Communicable Disease Control)

- [http://www.toronto.ca/health/cdc/index.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/health/cdc/index.htm)
- [http://www.toronto.ca/health/cdc/resources/index.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/health/cdc/resources/index.htm)
INFECTIOUS DISEASE HAZARDS IN THE WORKPLACE:

As a group, discuss past incidents and identify actual/potential hazards:
PREVENTATIVE ACTIONS:

As a group, identify ways to prevent infectious disease hazards in the workplace:
QUESTIONS/COMMENTS