

Chapter:	Health, Safety and Security Management		
Title:	Infection Control and Universal Precautions		
Policy: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Procedure: <input type="checkbox"/>	Review Cycle: Triennial Author: Dir. of Op	Adopted Date: 08.2020 Review Date: 09.2023	Related Policies: Emergency Preparedness Food Storage and Preparation Agency Vehicles

Purpose:

Hopeful Horizons (HH) has established this policy to ensure appropriate standards and practices are maintained regarding the prevention, surveillance, identification, and control of infectious diseases that are commonly transmitted through exposure to blood and/or other body fluid.

Scope:

This policy applies to:

- All HH Staff Selected HH Staff, as specified:
 HH Board Members HH Volunteers
 Other: Clients and Visitors

Policy:

It is the policy of HH to minimize the transmission of contagious illness and communicable diseases through the proper use of cleanliness and hygiene standards and universal precautions.

- A. **Universal Precautions and Infection Prevention and Control:** The concept of universal precautions presumes that all bodily fluids are infectious and therefore all employees and volunteers are to handle blood and or body fluids as if infected. This not only protects employees/volunteers, but also, by applying the same procedures to everyone, removes the stigma that might otherwise be associated with glove-and-mask use around contagious clients.
1. Hand washing is the single most important practice for preventing the spread of disease and infection. Proper hand washing will be completed as a part of regular work practice and routine, regardless of the presence or absence of any recognized disease and infection. Hand washing shall occur before and after handling food, before and after assisting an individual with personal care, with any contact with blood or body fluids, or after any possible contamination.
 2. Staff and volunteers shall ensure that their coughs and sneezes are appropriately covered. Appropriately covered means coughing or sneezing into a tissue or paper towel. When these items are not available, staff will cough or sneeze into their elbows. Face coverings such as a mask may be appropriate if coughing or sneezing persists over time or is uncontrolled.
 3. Gloves will be used as a barrier between hands and any potential source of infection. Gloves must be worn when contact with high risk bodily fluids can be reasonably anticipated. Fresh gloves will be used for each situation and for each person served. Removal of gloves should be from “glove to glove” and “skin to skin” ensuring contamination is folded into glove.
 4. Following activities (meals, activities, meetings, training, treatment, service, etc.) or blood/body fluid exposure, surfaces shall be cleaned and sanitized by staff, volunteers and/or clients using an appropriate disinfecting agent. Gloves should always be worn when cleaning a surface believed to be contaminated with blood/body fluids.
 5. When handling linen and clothing contaminated with high-risk bodily fluids, staff and/or volunteers shall wear gloves at all times. Contaminated laundry will be cleaned in the washing machine and dried in the dryer separate from non-contaminated laundry.
 6. HH shall provide personal protective equipment minimally including gloves and masks at all locations.

- B. Care and Sanitation of the General Program Site: All program and service sites (including agency vehicles) shall be kept clean and free from accumulations of dirt, grease, garbage, peeling paint, mold, vermin, and insects. Any building and equipment deterioration, safety hazards, and unsanitary conditions shall be corrected. The Director of Operations (DO) shall be the primary contact for any items requiring repair and maintenance.
1. HH uses a cleaning service for all locations. The cleaning service is responsible for all common areas. Staff and volunteers are responsible for the cleanliness of their work areas and common areas during business hours. Clients are responsible for cleaning all common areas of the shelter and their bedrooms. Cleaning and disinfecting schedules will be developed for the shelter and implemented by staff.
 2. Universal precautions must be taken when cleaning any area of the facility or when packing client belongings.
 3. HH subscribes to a monthly pest control service and an annual bed bug treatment for the shelter. Pest control for other facilities is contracted on an as needed basis. Any bugs that are seen in the shelter facility or any bites received in the shelter facility must be reported to the Director of Residential Services (DRS) immediately. When possible, sample bugs should be safely and securely collected and provided to the DRS. The DRS shall schedule additional pest control services and inspections if an infestation is suspected. Use of areas of the facility that have confirmed infestations will be suspended until the area is treated and the infestation has been cleared.
 4. Shelter residents who have been exposed to bed bugs, scabies and lice must ensure all of their belongings and linens have been washed and dried at high heat and their rooms have been sanitized. HH shall provide shampoos, topical treatments and will provide assistance with transportation and money for the laundromat, if needed.
 5. Food preparation and storage shall be managed consistent with HH policy. Food and drink will not be stored in areas where bodily fluids, hazardous materials, and harmful substances may be present (i.e., bathrooms).
 6. HH shall provide cleaning supplies and equipment at all locations.
- C. Notice of Contagious Illness: HH is best able to limit exposure to contagious illnesses when provided with timely notice.
1. Staff, volunteers and clients who are diagnosed with a contagious illness should remain home until the illness has been resolved or they have been cleared by a physician. Staff shall comply with HHs' Attendance and Punctuality policy and Leave Request procedure for providing notice of any necessary leave.
 2. Shelter residents who have any sort of contagious illness must notify shelter staff upon admission to the program or upon diagnosis. The resident will be asked to stay in their room, to limit contact with others, and to use reasonable precautions to prevent the illness from spreading until they are no longer contagious.
 3. HH staff may consult with the Health Department for guidance around addressing specific incidents of contagious illness.
 4. Staff at risk of exposure shall be informed of any illnesses and infestations including but not limited to the type of illness or infestation, the manner of transmission, and appropriate preventive measures. Personal health information of the person(s) affected shall be protected consistent with HHs' Confidentiality and Privacy policy. Each staff person is responsible for taking precautions to maintain her/his health.
- D. Significant Infectious Disease Exposure Risk/Event: If it is determined by HHs' CEO/designee based on recommendations from the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SC DHEC) or the United States Center for Disease Control (CDC) that staff, volunteers,

clients or the general public are at an increased risk of exposure to an infectious disease, additional precautions may be employed including, but not limited to:

1. Restricting access to HHs' facilities and programs including implementing remote work and service provision. If an employee's job responsibilities are better suited to the office/shelter environment, their supervisor will work with them to make any necessary adjustments to their schedule to ensure that social distancing can be practiced.
2. Returning to work in phases or working hybrid schedules in-office and remote.
3. Modifying job duties.
4. Limiting non-essential travel or requiring notice of travel and use of mass transit (airplane, bus, train, cruise ships) and adherence to guidelines regarding isolation after travel.
5. Restricting use of agency vehicles and limiting passengers.
6. Requiring completion of health screening questions and/or temperature check prior to entry.
7. Employees, volunteers, clients, and visitors may be required to wear well-fitting face masks (that fully cover the mouth, nose and chin and fit snugly) in common areas and when meeting face-to-face with others.
8. Employees, volunteers, clients and visitors may be asked to practice social distancing. Room occupancy adjustments shall be made to assure standards are feasible.
9. Employees, volunteers, clients and visitors may be encouraged to wash and/or sanitize hands more frequently. Soap and hand sanitizer shall be provided at each location. Everyone shall be encouraged to sanitize their hands upon entering and before exiting the building.
10. Additional cleaning and disinfecting protocols may be put into place.
11. SC DHEC/CDC quarantine guidance shall be practiced for employees/volunteers who test positive or exhibit symptoms.

Clients cannot be denied services if they are unable or unwilling to submit to health screenings or adhere to additional precautions. If this is the case, alternate arrangements for virtual services or other precautionary measures shall be put into place.

Specific procedures shall be established and may be modified in response to the situation and based on recommendations made by the CDC and/or the SC DHEC.

- E. **Compliance:** Staff and volunteers are responsible for adhering to universal precaution infection control requirements as defined by this policy. If there are obstacles to the implementation of universal precautions, they shall be immediately reported to the program supervisor or the DO. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action.

HH reserves the right to deny access to facilities to any non-client visitors known to be infected with a contagious condition who refuse to comply with universal precautions and other practices known to prevent contamination/risk of contamination of others. HH shall take alternative measures to accommodate clients who refuse to comply with universal precautions and other practices known to prevent contamination.

Communication and Training:

The Board shall receive a copy of the policy at the time of periodic review and will have an opportunity to ask clarifying questions during the approval process. Employees and volunteers

shall receive notice of the Board’s policy review and approval including notice of any substantive changes. The notice will provide a link to the policy located on the HH website.

All HH employees, volunteers and residents of the shelter shall receive initial orientation to this policy and the related requirements. Employees at increased risk of exposure due to direct client service/treatment shall receive updated training annually.

Definitions:

1. Contagious/Communicable Diseases: An infectious disease (such as cholera, hepatitis, influenza, malaria, measles, or tuberculosis) that is transmissible by contact with infected individuals or their bodily discharges or fluids (such as respiratory droplets, blood, or semen), by contact with contaminated surfaces or objects, by ingestion of contaminated food or water, or by direct or indirect contact with disease vectors (such as mosquitoes, fleas, or mice).
2. Infectious Diseases: Disorders caused by organisms — such as bacteria, viruses, fungi or parasites. Many organisms live in and on our bodies. They're normally harmless or even helpful. But under certain conditions, some organisms may cause disease. Some infectious diseases can be passed from person to person. Some are transmitted by insects or other animals. And you may get others by consuming contaminated food or water or being exposed to organisms in the environment.
3. Social Distancing: the practice of limiting physical closeness and contact with other people, especially to avoid catching or transmitting an infectious disease.

Other Related Materials:

NA

References/Legal Authority:

[A Best Practice Approach for Reducing Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure, Department of Industrial Relations, CAL/OSHA Consultation Services, 2001](#)
[The Basic of Standard Precautions, CDC, 2023](#)
[What is the Bloodborne Pathogen Standard, OSHA, 2011](#)

Change Log:

Date of Change	Description of Change	Responsible Party
09.2023	Updates to the policy template; expands use of universal precautions to all personnel and volunteers; combines infection control and cleaning/hygiene policy requirements; generalizes pandemic to “significant exposure event”, adds communication and training, definitions, and references.	N. Miller, Prog. Eval. Consultant w/J. Brown, Dir. of Operations