

RISK SERVICES

EMPLOYEE SAFETY UPDATE

Bloodborne pathogens: Minimizing exposure risk for healthcare workers

Bloodborne pathogens (BBPs) are microorganisms found in blood and bodily fluids that can cause serious health risks. The three BBPs that have posed a serious health threat include hepatitis B virus (HBV), hepatitis C virus (HCV) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which causes acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). BBPs are usually transmitted or passed on when microorganisms enter the body through mucus membranes or through breaks in the skin. They may also enter the body through open cuts, nicks, skin abrasions and cracked skin caused by various types of dermatitis.

Health professionals are particularly at risk of exposure, especially if they aren't wearing the proper personal protective equipment (PPE) or practicing universal precautions. Universal precautions are a method of infection control whereby blood and bodily fluids are treated as if they are already infected with BBPs.

Here are the steps health professionals can take to minimize their risk of exposure:

- Use extreme caution in everything you do at work.
- Be vaccinated against HBV.
- Ask to see your company's exposure control plan. An exposure control plan is a written document that describes which jobs involve potential exposure to BBPs and what steps are in place to limit or eliminate that exposure.
- Always use the PPE provided for you when handling blood or bodily fluids. Any opening on your body or skin — eyes, mouth, skin rash or a cut — is a route of entry for pathogens. PPE may include disposable, single-use gloves, masks, face shields, goggles, protective eyewear with side shields, lab coats, gowns, caps, hoods or protective shoe covers or boots. Check disposable gloves for tears or punctures before use, and bandage cuts or broken skin before putting on gloves.
- Don't keep food or drink in work areas, and don't eat, drink, smoke, apply cosmetics or handle contact lenses in areas with exposure potential.
- Use a brush and dustpan, tongs or forceps to pick up potentially contaminated glass or other debris.
- Avoid bending, breaking or recapping used needles. If recapping is necessary, use a one-handed technique. Immediately dispose of used needles and other sharps in designated, puncture-resistant containers labeled with the bright orange or orange/red biohazard symbol.
- Wipe up blood or bodily fluid spills immediately. Use the disinfectant provided for this specific use.
- Double-bag infectious waste if the outside of the first bag has been contaminated by blood or bodily fluids.
- Remove protective clothing immediately after you leave the work area. Place it in the proper receptacles for laundering or decontamination.
- Discard disposable gloves and masks in designated containers, which should be labeled "biohazard."
- Wash your hands after removing gloves. Use a disposable towel for turning on the faucets to avoid cross-contamination.
- Don't suction or pipette potentially infectious materials with your mouth.
- If you need to perform CPR, use a one-way valve mask, disposable airway equipment and resuscitation masks.



DROWSY DRIVING PREVENTION WEEK

Drowsy Driving Prevention Week (DDPW) is held annually on the week following the end of daylight saving time (DST), which will be Nov. 5-11. Sponsored by the [National Sleep Foundation](#) (NSF), the week is a time to reflect on how dangerously common — yet preventable — drowsy driving is. The NSF's campaign goal is to reduce the number of drivers who drive while sleep deprived.

The [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) reports that an estimated 100,000 crashes each year are caused primarily by drowsy driving, resulting in more than 71,000 injuries. Young drivers — ages 16-25 years — and shift workers are at greatest risk of falling asleep behind the wheel. A 2022 survey conducted by the NSF found that 95% of Americans think drowsy driving is risky, but many drivers do it anyway. Additionally, 62% of drivers have driven a car when they were so tired that they had a hard time keeping their eyes open.

There are three key steps to take before driving that can help you prevent falling asleep behind the wheel. These steps include:

1. Getting the recommended amount of sleep (approximately 7-9 hours) the night before your trip. You can achieve better sleep by avoiding heavy meals and alcohol before bedtime, having a consistent routine and wind-down time, putting electronic devices away an hour before bed, and sleeping in a quiet, cool and dark environment.
2. Planning long trips with a companion.
3. Scheduling regular stops every 100 miles or 2 hours.

America Recycles Day

Each year, [America Recycles Day](#) (ARD) is observed on Nov. 15 to encourage people to recycle. Thousands of communities across the country participate by promoting environmental citizenship and taking action to increase and improve recycling in the U.S. Sponsored by the Keep America Beautiful program, the annual observation began in 1994 after two employees of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) suggested the idea to the National Recycling Coalition (NRC). The Keep America Beautiful program was formed in 1953 by a group of corporate and civic leaders in New York City who wanted to bring the public and private sectors together to develop and promote a national cleanliness effort.

Recycling has many benefits, including:

- Reducing the amount of waste sent to landfills and incinerators.
- Conserving natural resources such as timber, water and minerals.
- Lessening the burning of fossil fuels, which can decrease the emissions of greenhouse gas.

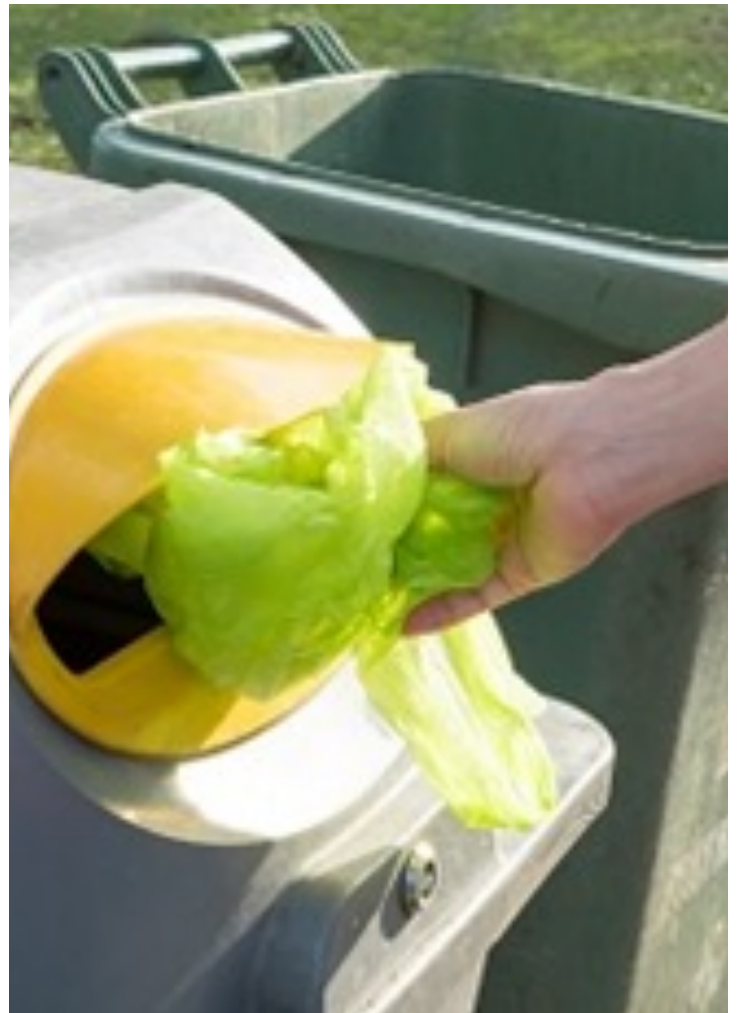
You can usually recycle clean plastic, cans, glass, paper and cardboard. Keep all food and liquids out of recycling; if your container once held food, rinse and dry it before recycling. The recycling codes for plastics are divided into seven categories. Generally, the higher the number, the more difficult it is for the material to be recycled. More information about recycling codes can be found on the [Department of Energy](#) website.

Items that can't be recycled include:

- Single-use plastics (like straws, wrappers, utensils and grocery bags).
- Styrofoam cups and containers.
- Medical waste.
- Food waste (but many foods can be composted).

Because not all waste items can be recycled, it's important to think before you shop and try to decrease the amount of waste you produce.

In addition to the **#BeRecycled** pledge, people can be part of the recycling solution by participating in or hosting their own America Recycles Day event.



RESTAURANT SAFETY — PREVENTING CUSTOMER FALLS

The restaurant industry is particularly susceptible to slips, trips and falls. Because restaurant employees work in such a fast-paced environment and surfaces can frequently become slippery, customers can easily fall victim to these types of injuries.

Always follow these preventive measures to prevent injuries:

- Use an entrance mat to remove moisture from customers' footwear. Make sure the mat is placed on a clean, dry and level surface.
- Report buckling, torn or worn carpets and mats.
- Report any uneven surfaces inside or outside the restaurant to management.
- Keep pathways clear, close cabinet doors after use and don't store items on the floor or in stairwells.
- Never overfill busing containers.
- Clean up spills and debris as soon as you or a guest spots them. Never leave a spill unattended while getting a mop. Instead, place one employee at the spill to direct guests around it while another gets the cleaning materials. Place a warning sign by the spill, and keep it posted until the area is clean and dry.
- Identify and pay particular attention to floors in areas where guests or employees have slipped, tripped or fallen in the past.
- Ensure that appropriate cleaning materials are readily available to clean up any spills and that you know where to find them.
- Avoid using the same mop in the front of the house that you use in the back to prevent the spread of grease throughout the restaurant.
- Stay on top of tasks, such as changing the mop water or replacing mop heads as needed.
- Check the bathrooms on a regular schedule to make sure the floors are clean and dry.
- Make sure your restaurant has adequate lighting.
- Walk calmly during your shift, and pay attention to your surroundings.





Chemical spotlight

Furfuryl alcohol

Furfuryl alcohol is a colorless or yellow liquid that turns red or brown in the air. It has a mild alcohol or ether-like odor and is used as a flavoring, in making sealants and in cements.

Furfuryl alcohol isn't compatible with oxidizing agents, strong acids, acid chlorides, metal salts and peroxides. Store furfuryl alcohol in tightly closed containers in a cool, well-ventilated area away from combustibles and water. Sources of ignition are prohibited where the chemical is used, handled or stored.

If furfuryl alcohol is spilled or leaked, avoid breathing vapors, mist or gas, and ensure adequate ventilation. Remove all sources of ignition and evacuate personnel to safe areas. Use personal protective equipment (PPE), including goggles or safety glasses, gloves, flame-retardant protective clothing and respiratory

protection.

If it is safe to do so, prevent further leakage or spillage and don't let the product enter drains, sewers, underground or confined spaces, groundwater, waterways or discharge into the environment. Absorb liquids in vermiculite, dry sand, earth or similar material, and deposit it in sealed containers. Ventilate and wash the area after cleanup is complete. It may be necessary to contain and dispose of furfuryl alcohol as a hazardous waste.

Contact the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and local environmental regulatory agency for specific recommendations.

Questions? Check out the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency website](#).