

Infectious Diseases

Corporate Health and Safety Team

2.0.

Version	Author	Date
1.0	Health and Safety Unit	October 2013
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Document History

Name of Policy	H&SP19 – Infectious Diseases
Purpose of Policy	Minimise workplace risks relating to infectious diseases and bloodborne virus.
Policy Applies to	All New Forest District Council employees, agency works and volunteers
Update Frequency	Every 2 years
Latest Update	June 2025
Update Overview	<p><u>Per 2001</u> First addition of policy.</p> <p><u>October 2013</u> Review of policy in the form of management advice note (MANS).</p> <p><u>July 2025</u> Full review of policy.</p>

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1. Introduction

This policy sets out the council approach to controlling and reducing the risks of infectious diseases such as blood borne viruses (BBV) to employees. The policy will outline how the council will meet its legal requirements as outlined under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, and the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002.

1.1. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of New Forest District Council (NFDC) and those individuals undertaking work on behalf of NFDC (agency and voluntary staff).

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2. Legislative and Regulatory Context

2.1. The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 is the primary piece of legislation in the UK. It requires employers to provide a safe workplace for its employees, provide adequate training, information and supervision and ensure safe systems of work, including hygiene and infection control protocols.

2.2. The Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999

The Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999 requires employees to undertake suitable and sufficient risk assessment on the significant risks their employees face at work, including infectious diseases.

2.3. Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002

The Control of Substances Hazardous to health (COSHH) Regulations 2002 is a key piece of legislation that directly addresses the management of infectious diseases in the workplace, particularly those caused by biological agents such as viruses, bacteria, and other microorganisms. The legislation requires the prevention of exposure, implementing suitable control measures to reduce risks from infectious diseases and providing health surveillance and monitoring of exposures.

3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Bloodborne Virus (BBV)	Viruses that are carried by some people in their blood and can be spread from one person to other.
Biological agent	A micro-organism, cell culture or human endoparasite, whether or not genetically modified, which may cause infection, allergy, toxicity or otherwise create hazard to human health.
Infectious disease	Infections at work created by exposure to harmful micro-organisms such as bacteria, fungi, viruses, internal parasites, and other infectious proteins known as prions.
Occupational Exposure	Contact with a harmful agent at work, which could cause physical, chemical or biological harm.
Suitable and Sufficient	Suitable for the level, risk, and complexities of the task.
Hierarchy of control	A prioritised approach to managing workplace risk: 1 – elimination 2 - Substitution 3 – Engineering controls 4 – admin controls 5 - PPE

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1. Senior Manager/Service Manager must:

- Ensure supervisors and managers within their service area are provided with sufficient resources to protect their employees from infectious diseases and BBVs.
- Ensure all employees within their service are provided with sufficient training and information in relation to the risks of infectious diseases and BBVs

4.2. Line Manager/Supervisors must:

- Ensure all employees within their teams are provided with sufficient training and information in relation to the risks and protection measures of infectious diseases and BBVs
- Ensure employees within their service area are provided with sufficient personal protective equipment to protect themselves from infectious diseases and BBVs.
- Ensure suitable and sufficient risk assessments and method statements are in place for all tasks undertaken by their teams.
- As identified within risk assessments, ensure the offer of vaccinations is provided to effected employees.
- When a vaccination is declined by an employee, keep a signed record and store on the employee's personal files.
- Maintain employee records in line with council policies and procedures.

4.3. Employees must:

- Follow all risk assessments and method statements.
- Attend relevant mandatory training sessions.
- Report all accident/incident and near misses to their supervisor/line manager and a member of the corporate health and safety team.

4.4. Corporate Health and Safety Team must:

- Provide competent advice and guidance to all council services.
- Investigate all accidents/incidents in line with the council accident reporting and investigation policy.
- Where required, report any disease attributed to an occupational exposure to a biological agent.
- When appropriate, add a record of exposure to Eco Online Chemical Manager.

4.5. HR Advisory must:

- Provide competent advice and guidance to all employees.

5. Procedures

5.1. Reportable Diseases

Regulation 9 of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013 requires employers and self-employed workers to report:

- Any disease caused by an occupational exposure to a biological agent
- Cases of occupational cancer.

Reportable diseases include:

- Certain poisonings
- Some skin diseases such as occupational dermatitis, skin cancer, chrome ulcer, oil folliculitis/acne
- Lung diseases including:
 - Occupational asthma, farmers lung, pneumoconiosis, asbestosis, mesothelioma
- Infections such as:
 - Leptospirosis, hepatitis, tuberculosis, anthrax, legionellosis and tetanus
- Other conditions such as:
 - Occupational cancer; certain musculoskeletal disorders, decompression illness and hand-arm vibration syndrome.

Further details can be found on the [HSE website](#).

Employees must report any accident involving the exposure or potential exposure to an infectious disease to their line manager and a member of the Corporate Health and Safety Team. Employees, supervisors and line managers must follow the reporting and investigation procedures outlined within [H&SP04 – Accident/Incident Reporting & investigation policy](#).

5.2. Risk Assessment and Method Statements

All services are required to undertake suitable and sufficient risk assessments and method statements for all tasks their teams undertake. Generic and task specific risk assessments must take into consideration the potential exposure to infectious diseases and blood borne viruses (BBV). It is the responsibility of the relevant supervisor/line manager to undertake a suitable and sufficient risk assessment of all tasks undertaken by their teams, when undertaking an assessment, they must take into consideration the hierarchy of control. Further advice and guidance can be found on the [H&S risk assessment intranet pages](#).

All risk assessments and method statements must be reviewed annually, or if there has been a significant change, or as a result of an accident investigation.

5.3. Information and Training

The council has a legal requirement to provide its employees with information about the sorts of infections relevant to their work and symptoms that can occur. This includes the importance of good personal hygiene, location of emergency services and the requirement to cover all cuts with a suitable waterproof dressing.

Job specific information and training must be provided to employees as part of their health and safety induction. This should take the form of information booklets/information sheets and in the form of toolbox talks.

Training records must be held in line with the council's retention policy. It is the responsibility of the relevant supervisor/line manager to ensure all records are correct and up to date.

5.4. Vaccinations

Employees who are at greater threat to certain infectious diseases due to the work they undertake can be afforded protection by inoculation and should be encouraged to take this up. The offer of vaccinations to certain infectious diseases must be identified within the relevant task specific risk assessment. Within the council.

The following infectious diseases have been identified as higher risk:

- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Hepatitis C
- Leptospirosis*
- Tetanus

* Leptospirosis – because the early stages of this disease can be mistaken for a “flu like” infection, it is important that GPs are alerted to the fact that the patient has been exposed to a risk of infection, however slight. See appendix 3.

The offer of vaccinations should be discussed at the employee’s induction process.

Appendices 2 & 4 include standard letter template which can be taken to an employee’s GP on request of a vaccination. Any charges occurred will be re-paid to the employee upon the return of a receipt. HR Advisory will provide additional guidance and advice to managers, supervisors and employees.

Vaccination records must be held within the employee’s personal folders and maintained by the relevant supervisors/line manager. Employee records should include dates of employee vaccinations and when any boosters or follow-up screenings are due.

If the offer of vaccination is declined, the relevant Supervisor must send a letter to the employee to confirm they would like to decline this offer. See appendix 1. The employee must return a signed copy to their supervisor.

5.5. Person Protective Equipment

Employees must be provided with suitable and sufficient person protective equipment (PPE). All PPE required, and the standard of that PPE must be identified within the relevant risk assessments and method statements. All employees must follow the requirements outlined within **H&SP09- Corporate Personal Protective Equipment Policy**.

5.6. Record of Exposure

A record of any exposure to an infectious disease or BBV must be recorded on Eco Online Chemical Manager exposure module. Following the relevant accident/incident form has been completed, the Corporate Health and Safety team must update the record of exposure within **Eco Online Chemical Manager**.

6. Relevant Legislation & Guidance

6.1. Legislation

- **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974**
- **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**
- **The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002**
- **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences 2013**

6.2. Policies & Procedures

- **H&SP01 – Corporate Health and Safety Policy**
- **H&SP04 – Accident/Incident Reporting & Investigation Policy**
- **H&SP07 – Corporate COSHH Policy**
- **H&SP23 – Health Surveillance**

6.3. Guidance

- **Bloodborne viruses (BBVs) – HSE website**
- **Managing the risk of needlestick or sharps injuries – HSE website**
- **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) – HSE website**
- **Health surveillance and occupational health – HSE website**

7. Appendix

Appendix 1 – Confirmation of Declined Vaccination Offer

Appendix 2 – Letter Template – Hepatitis B

Appendix 3 – Information for General Practitioners

Appendix 4 – Letter Template Tetanus

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