

Infection Control Guidelines

A-019

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The following is issued to re-emphasize to firefighters the appropriate methods of limiting exposure to infectious diseases.

Guidelines:

The following precautions are suggested as basic sanitary measures applicable to the handling of all patients:

1. Assume that all patients may have a communicable disease;
2. Assume that all blood is potentially infected;
3. For patients known to have a communicable disease, inform medical personnel (if applicable) and the receiving hospital;
4. Always exercise caution in administering any life support procedures which result in contact with blood or body fluids;
5. Gloves should be worn when treatment involves contact with patient's blood, body fluids, secretions, or excretions in order to avoid accidental contamination of open skin lesions;
6. Exercise care to avoid accidental wounds or punctures from sharp instruments, metal, or glass;
7. After coming into contact with a patient, avoid touching your mouth, nose, eyes, or other mucous membranes until you have washed your hands thoroughly;
8. Use of a bag-valve-mask with reservoir, a manually-triggered, oxygen-powered resuscitative device, or pocket mask is preferred for patients in respiratory arrest;
9. Wash your hands after every call;
10. Wash equipment, not able to be sterilized, that comes in contact with patient's blood, body fluids, secretions, or excretions with a 1:10 dilution of sodium hypochlorite (1 part household bleach, 10 parts water);
11. Place disposable glove, etc. and any contaminated articles of clothing not intended to be reused in a RED biohazard bag and dispose of properly.