

# Town of Meredith - Administrative Regulation

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Approved By: Phillip L. Warren, Jr.

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## **Subject: Exposure Control**

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### **I. PURPOSE**

It is the intent of this regulation to provide employees of the Town of Meredith with information relative to protective measures that can be taken to assist in reducing to the potential of contracting many of the known infectious diseases that may be encountered during their daily occupational related duties. This document has been developed for the purpose of assisting in developing an awareness of this potential and reflects some of the more common protective measures that all employees should implement while performing their daily work duties.

There are three basic ways that such diseases are spread amongst individuals: air borne, direct contact with bodily fluids of the infected individual, and indirect contact.

- Air borne contact could occur by being present when the infected individual coughs, sneezes, etc. and we inhale minute particles of saliva containing the disease. One of the more commonly known diseases transmitted in this manner is Tuberculosis.
- Direct contact with bodily fluids, such as blood, excrement, etc, originating from an infected individual, can occur while being in direct contact with the individual or coming in contact with bodily fluids left by the individual, such as dried blood. Contacts such as these can occur very easily and often will happen without obvious situations being present such as coming in contact with a piece of clothing containing dried blood vs. attending to an infected individual's open wound that was the result of a traumatic injury. A common disease transmitted by this method is Hepatitis B.
- Indirect contact would be a situation where an employee may get bitten by a mosquito carrying malaria or virus. A commonly recognized disease that is transmitted in this manner is West Nile Virus.

It is understood that departments, whose employees are more apt to face exposure on a frequent basis, would have specific departmental policies and procedures in place, to be followed by their department members. Departments that fall within this category include Public Works – transfer station; Sewer Department; Public Works – buildings and grounds; Police; and, Fire. For all other employees, considered to be low risk, a general awareness of the methods of contracting such diseases and related precautions is necessary.

### **II. RECORD KEEPING**

As a part of an employee's confidential medical file all information referencing occupational exposures, immunization records, copies of all examinations, medical testing, follow-up procedures and copies of information provided to healthcare providers along with their written

opinions referencing occupational exposures. In addition, a roster or other evidence of applicable training for high-risk employees shall be retained as a part of the employee's medical file.

If any Town employee is exposed or suspects having been exposed, it is that individual's responsibility to complete an "**Accident/Incident Investigation Report**" form within 24 hours of when the incident occurs (see **AR 3** for instructions regarding this form). For the purposes of Workers' Compensation, the NH Department of Labor defines a "critical exposure" as "contact of an employee's ruptured or broken skin or mucous membrane with a person's blood or body fluid, other than tears, saliva or perspiration, of a magnitude that can result in transmission of blood borne disease." It is important to note that should timely medical action be necessary as the result of the occurrence of an event, it will be the responsibility of the treating physician to decide the course of action to take, based on the incident involved.

### **III. RISK REDUCTION**

**Immunizations and testing** – Employees of the Town, who are considered to be high risk, are encouraged to receive immunizations for diseases such as Hepatitis-B and tests for diseases such as Tuberculosis. Such immunizations and tests are at no cost to the employee and will be offered periodically. Employee medical files should contain evidence of such immunizations and/or tests. Should an employee refuse to undergo such immunization(s)/test(s), then a signed waiver to that fact should be obtained and included in the respective employee's medical file.

**Uniforms/work clothing** – Home laundering of contaminated or suspected contaminated uniforms/protective clothing/work clothing is not allowed since the Town is unable to guarantee that proper procedures are being followed; therefore contamination could migrate to the homes of the impacted employees. Laundering by the Town will be at no cost to the employee. Clothing articles shall be placed in a plastic bag and the bag shall be secured in such a manner to prevent further contamination. A description of the nature of the contamination shall accompany the bag. This description is vital and will be used for laundering purposes. The Town reserves the right to replace clothing, should it be deemed more appropriate given the circumstances involved. The employee shall wash/shower as soon as practical after the incident.

**Personal protective equipment** - A variety of personal protective equipment is available to Town employees, depending upon their risk potential. Such items include, but not limited to: gloves, goggles/safety glasses, protective suits, skin cleaners, equipment/tool cleaners, insect repellent containment bags, etc.

**Disposal of contaminated materials** - Care should be used when disposing of contaminated materials. In instances not covered in high-risk departmental guidelines, it will be necessary that such contaminated materials be placed in tightly sealed containers (e.g. a plastic trash bag) with a description of the nature of contamination, articles included, etc. The Town's Health Officer should then be notified as to the circumstances and he/she will take the necessary measures for proper disposal. Such container(s) should be stored in a manner so as not to contaminate other personnel or material.

**Reporting** - As previously indicated, specific departmental policies and procedures shall be developed and periodically updated by departments whose employees are considered to be at a high risk. Such policies and procedures shall contain specific or recommended practices to be followed, depending upon the nature of the risk. Generally, the best measure of personal protection is awareness of the potential for contracting such diseases and to avoid unnecessary contact with air borne particles and/or bodily fluids such as blood or excrement. When it is reasonable to believe that contact may occur, protective measures such as gloves, goggles, etc. should be utilized together with an immediate and thorough washing of the contacted skin area with soap and warm water. If it is believed that such air borne particles or fluids may have entered your body an Incident Report should be completed followed by timely medical attention.

Phillip L. Warren, Jr.  
Town Manager