**1.0 POLICY**

 It is the policy of the *Insert Department Name* to provide its employees with a safe and healthy work environment. The Department is committed to a course of action which will prevent the spread of communicable diseases through this policy.

**2.0 PURPOSE**

This policy was developed to provide guidance in the understanding of and working with members of the public and/or fellow employees who may be or are infected with a communicable disease. These guidelines are established to ensure that proper procedures are taken when a suspected person may have a communicable disease.

**3.0 Communicable Diseases**

Communicable diseases are defined as any type of disease that can be transmitted from one person to another. Transmissions routes include the following:

* Respiratory Droplet: infection occurs when the germ from an infected person’s lungs, throat, mouth, and/or nose comes into contact with the mucous membranes (i.e., eyes, nose, or mouth) of another person through coughing, talking, singing, spitting, or sneezing. The transfer range of these droplets occurs at distances of less than six (6) feet.
* Direct Contact: infection occurs when germs are spread from person-to-person through skin-to-skin contact, skin-to-mucous membrane, or mucous membrane-to-mucous membrane contact. This would require a break or micro-tear (i.e., very dry skin) in the skin or using the contaminated hand to touch the mucous membranes of the body (i.e., eyes, nose, or mouth).
* Indirect Contact: infection occurs when germs are spread from an infected person to a contaminated object (i.e., table, door knob, etc.) then to a person through contact with the contaminated object.

**4.0 Prevention, Precaution and Procedures**

The main rule for prevention of a communicable disease is to treat everyone as if they have a possible disease. There is no need to treat any communicable diseases any differently due to similarities in their route of transmission. The simple rule is to eliminate the possibility of germs traveling through these routes of transmission. The following are a list of precautions and preventive measures:

* Vaccinations
	+ Consult with a personal physician or other licensed health care professional to inquire about vaccinations and determine what might be needed. Not all employees are immune to certain diseases (i.e., chicken pox, whooping cough, mumps, measles, etc.). Also, note that the CDC now recommends that all persons receive an influenza vaccine every year.
* Proper Personal Practices/Hygiene
	+ Keep hands away from mucous membranes such as the eyes, nose, and mouth.
	+ Discourage sharing of glasses and/or utensils unless clean/washed.
	+ Cover the mouth and nose with the crook of the elbow when coughing and sneezing
	+ Use tissues when coughing and sneezing and wash/disinfect hands after use.
	+ Discard used tissues in appropriate waste containers. Do not reuse tissues or handkerchiefs.
	+ Wash and sanitize the hands through soap and warm water or hand sanitizers. Do this before doing tasks such as rubbing the eyes, eating, scratching the nose, picking objects from the teeth, etc.
* Wound Care and Moisturizing Hands
	+ Cover any breaks in skin, sores, or lesions with dressing (i.e., bandages, gauze, etc.).
	+ Keep hands moisturized (i.e., lotion) to prevent dry and/or cracked skin. Dry and/or cracked skin can create openings and/or micro-tears in the skin barrier.
* Surface Decontamination
	+ Disinfect and clean surfaces regularly. Extra cleaning is only necessary when there is a documented or suspected bodily fluid exposure on the surface (i.e., pus, sputum, fresh or dried blood, urine, etc.)
	+ Request to have the participant resubmit paperwork if soiled (i.e., dirty, stained, or tarnished) with bodily fluids. Practice proper washing/sanitizing of hands after handling paperwork.

A fact sheet based on eliminating risks of transmission and the preventive measures can be found in Appendix A. **REMEMBER: Communicable diseases are preventable by proper precautions and managing the risks of transmission.**

**5.0 Responsibilities**

Employees

* Follow the procedures/precautions consistent with this program.
* Immediately report all exposures, injuries, and safety deficiencies or potentially hazardous conditions to their supervisors. If the employee’s direct supervisor is not available, report to the next available person in the employee’s line of supervision.

Supervisors/Office Head

* Ensure employees comply with procedures established in the Policy.
* Ensure the Policy has been implemented and is followed in their area(s) of responsibility.
* Ensure each affected employee under his/her direction is knowledgeable about the contents of this policy.
* Investigate all employee accidents, exposures and near misses.
* Communicate safety and health information to employees when hazards are identified or when new procedures are introduced into the work place.
* Ensure adequate resources and supplies are available for employees in order to comply with this policy (i.e., wall mounted hand sanitizers, soap, etc.).

**6.0 Confidentiality**

Except for legally required reporting, confidentially of all medical conditions shall be maintained. The number of persons who will be informed of the employee’s exposure and/or confirmed diagnosis shall be kept at the minimum needed to assure proper care of the employee and to detect situations where the potential for transmission may increase.

The *Insert job position here* shall be informed of an employee’s condition. This person shall be provided with appropriate information concerning any precautions which are necessary to ensure the safety of the employee and others. They shall be specifically cautioned regarding the employee’s right to privacy and confidentiality.

All employee records or information regarding communicable diseases will be confidentially maintained in a secure area apart from the employee’s personnel file.

**7.0 Reporting**

 The employees of County of Los Angeles Insert Department Name are not medical professionals (i.e., doctors, podiatrists, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses, infection control practitioners, medical examiners, etc.) and therefore not required to report instances of communicable diseases due to the uncertainty of the diagnosis and job duties of Department employees.

 If a medical professional has diagnosed a patient to have a reportable communicable disease, they have reported it to the County of Los Angeles, Department Public Health.