

Environmental Health and Safety Update

Biohazard Communication (Labels)

Overview

Equipment and work areas containing infectious agents, human blood or other potentially infectious materials, and all biological waste containers must contain a biohazard warning label. Labeling alerts visitors, emergency response personnel and other College personnel to a potential biological hazard. This Update outlines biohazard communication labeling requirements at the College.

Applicability

This Update applies to:

- all biological waste containers.
- refrigerators, freezers and any other equipment that contain infectious agents, human blood or other potentially infectious materials.
- work areas where contamination from infectious agents, human blood or other potentially infectious materials is reasonably expected and may be left unattended (e.g. blood workup area decontaminated once a day).

Room signage and shipping container labels are covered under different programs.

Definitions

Blood means human blood, human blood components, and products made from human blood.

Other Potentially Infectious Materials means (1) The following human body fluids: semen, vaginal secretions, cerebrospinal fluid, synovial fluid, pleural fluid, pericardial fluid, peritoneal fluid, amniotic fluid, saliva in dental procedures, any body fluid that is visibly contaminated with blood, and all body fluids in situations where it is difficult or impossible to differentiate between body fluids; (2) Any unfixed tissue or organ (other than intact skin) from a human (living or dead); and (3) HIV-containing cell or tissue cultures, organ cultures, and HIV- or HBV-containing culture medium or other solutions; and blood, organs, or other tissues from experimental animals infected with HIV or HBV.

Infectious Agent means any biological agent at Biosafety Level 2 or higher.

Responsibilities

Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) acts as a resource to College personnel, providing technical assistance and guidance on label placement. Additionally, EHS provides biohazard labels to laboratories on a limited basis.

Principal Investigators and Supervisors ensure all personnel adhere to the labeling requirements within this Update.

Personnel Using Infectious Agents, Human Blood or Other Potentially Infectious Materials label the work area, equipment and waste containers and seek assistance from their supervisor or EHS as needed.

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Procedure

Warning labels are affixed to all containers, equipment and work areas listed in the applicability section above. The labels must have a fluorescent-orange or orange-red background with lettering or symbols in a contrasting color and include the following biohazard symbol:



Limited supplies of labels (1" x .75" and 2.75" x 1.75") are available from EHS. For larger numbers of labels or different sizes, contact EHS for suppliers.

References

Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Control Plan, Weill Medical College of Cornell University

29CFR, §1910.1030, Bloodborne pathogens, Occupational Safety and Health Administration