**Communicable Diseases - Inmates**

**706.1   PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

This policy provides general guidelines to minimize the risk of inmates contracting and/or spreading communicable diseases as well as guidelines for diagnosing and treating communicable diseases among the inmate population.

706.1.1   DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Communicable disease** - A human disease caused by microorganisms that are present in and transmissible through human blood, bodily fluid, or tissue, or by breathing or coughing. These diseases commonly include but are not limited to hepatitis B virus (HBV), HIV, and tuberculosis.

**Exposure** - When an eye, mouth, mucous membrane, or non-intact skin comes into contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials or when these substances are injected or infused under the skin; when an individual is exposed to a person who has a disease that can be passed through the air by talking, sneezing, or coughing (e.g., tuberculosis), or the individual is in an area that was occupied by such a person. If uncertain, the Responsible Physician or the authorized designee will determine whether an incident meets the definition of an exposure.

**706.2   POLICY**

The Agency is committed to addressing the risks associated with communicable diseases among the inmate population.

**706.3   PROCEDURE**

The Responsible Physician or the authorized designee should prepare procedures related to communicable diseases that include:

1. Exposure prevention and decontamination procedures.
2. Procedures for when and how inmates may obtain medical attention in the event of an exposure or suspected exposure.
3. Procedures related to mitigating the risks associated with communicable disease in the inmate population. These will include but are not limited to:
4. Proper screening of incoming inmates.
5. Appropriate testing.
6. Investigations of suspected exposures.
7. Appropriate medical attention and precautions to be used by staff, including separating or isolating inmates appropriately.
8. Sanitation and inmate hygiene efforts, including the sanitation of medical equipment.
9. Control of vermin and parasites, such as mice, lice, and bedbugs.
10. Reporting communicable diseases and suspected exposures to the proper authorities.
11. Compliance with all relevant laws or regulations related to communicable diseases, including responding to requests and notifications regarding exposures covered under the Ryan White law (42 USC § 300ff-133; 42 USC § 300ff-136).

**706.4   EXPOSURE PREVENTION AND MITIGATION**

706.4.1   SUSPECTED EXPOSURE OF AN INMATE

Employees who become aware that an inmate may have been exposed should, as soon as practicable:

1. Take steps to reduce exposure to other inmates and begin decontamination procedures.
2. Use precautions related to exposure prevention as applicable to the situation (e.g., gloves, face masks).
3. Contact a qualified health care professional to care for the inmate as needed, and obtain recommendations regarding isolation or quarantine of the inmate.
4. Notify the appropriate supervisor through the chain of command﻿.

706.4.2   SUPERVISOR RESPONSE AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The responding supervisor should investigate every exposure or suspected exposure of an inmate as soon as reasonably practicable following notification. The supervisor should ensure the inmate receives appropriate medical assistance and that steps are taken to protect other inmates and staff.

All incidents involving a suspected exposure should be thoroughly documented.

706.4.3   MEDICAL CONSULTATION, EVALUATION, AND TREATMENT

Any exposed inmate has the opportunity to have a medical evaluation immediately after an exposure and follow-up evaluations as necessary. Testing a person for communicable diseases when that person was the source of an exposure may be sought when appropriate. Source testing is the responsibility of the Responsible Physician or authorized designee.

**706.5   INMATE CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information regarding inmates and possible communicable diseases shall be considered confidential health care records.

**IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE**

***The following information is provided to assist you in implementing this policy and should be deleted before the policy is issued to agency personnel.***

**Communicable Diseases - Inmates**

This policy is being provided to contribute to the ongoing discussions and actions regarding COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019).

This policy is intended as a starting point for local governments and agencies preparing policies for dealing with communicable diseases such as COVID-19 and exposure to the coronavirus. This is a national-level policy and does not include applicable state or local requirements.

Lexipol is not your agency’s policy maker. Your agency is responsible for reviewing, customizing, and adopting any version of this policy for your agency. Neither the policy nor any information provided should be considered to contain legal advice or opinions. You should contact your legal counsel to obtain legal advice.

The policy is intended to provide guidelines for agency personnel to assist in minimizing the risk of the inmate population of your facility contracting and/or spreading communicable diseases and to minimize the incidence of illness and injury. It addresses basic risk-reduction measures associated with communicable diseases, including exposure prevention and mitigation. It also addresses medical evaluation and treatment should an inmate be exposed to a communicable disease.

This policy provides the framework for an exposure control plan. It is not intended to replace an exposure control plan. Specific procedural mandates should be addressed in an exposure control plan.

**CUSTOMIZATION**

You should customize this policy to meet your agency’s practice, paying particular attention to the following sections:

PROCEDURE: The policy recommends that the Responsible Physician or the authorized designee create procedures that address sanitation and inmate hygiene efforts. We recommend that the designee consult the CDC website ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) for the latest guidance regarding facility sanitation and personal hygiene measures to be taken for COVID-19.