

Guidelines for Trauma Scene Management

Introduction

These guidelines for Trauma Scene Management can assist property owners and the public in cleaning up trauma scenes contaminated with human blood and other bodily fluids.

Trauma scenes result when people are seriously injured or die, often, but not always, during sudden, violent incidents or accidents. Following a traumatic incident, property owners need to clean and restore their property using safe work practices. These guidelines reference existing law, guidelines, and recommendations that protect workers and the public during clean-up, and comply with §17-193 of the New York City Administrative Code.

Guidelines for Trauma Scene Management contain important information on:

- Property owners' responsibilities
- Clean-up procedures
- Waste disposal
- Hiring a contractor
- References and resources
- Definitions

Property Owners' Responsibilities

1. Private and public property owners are responsible for cleaning up a trauma scene on their property.
2. Property owners who do not have employees who could clean up after traumatic incidents should hire contractors who provide this service (see the section, "Hiring a Contractor").
3. Private and public property owners and professional contractors must comply with applicable city, state, and federal law and guidelines. All private employers must comply with the OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standard (29CFR1910.1030) if their employees clean up trauma scenes contaminated with human blood and bodily fluids. Government agencies must also comply with this standard in accordance with the New York State Public Employees Safety and Health Act. The Bloodborne Pathogen Standard requires employers to:
 - Implement an Exposure Control Plan
 - Provide training for all employees who may have contact with human blood and other bodily fluids
 - Provide appropriate personal protective equipment
 - Offer Hepatitis B vaccination to all workers
 - Record all contact exposures with blood, other bodily fluids, and potentially-contaminated sharp objects, and offer follow-up medical attention.

Clean-up Procedures

Property owners and/or cleaning contractors should make sure employees follow these steps when cleaning up a trauma scene:

1. Restrict access to the area until clean-up is complete. Use caution tape or placards to warn the public and keep them away from the site.
2. Wear appropriate protective clothing, gloves and other protective equipment when cleaning the trauma scene in accordance with the Exposure Control Plan.
3. Place sharp objects, such as broken glass, which may be contaminated with blood or other bodily fluids in an appropriate puncture-resistant container for disposal as medical waste.
4. Clean hard surfaces with soap and water. Other optional cleaners and disinfectants include household bleach solution (1/3 cup household bleach in one gallon water) and disinfectants registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (see: <http://www.epa.gov/oppad001/chemregindex.htm>).
5. Clean personal items and items used in food preparation with soap, water and chlorine bleach (1/3 cup household bleach in one gallon water), or discard these items, if they can't be cleaned.
6. Clean reusable mops and rags with soap, water and chlorine bleach (1/3 cup household bleach in one gallon water), or discard these items, if they can't be cleaned.
7. Wash hands and all exposed skin thoroughly with soap and water when clean-up is complete.

Waste Disposal

Property owners and/or cleaning contractors are responsible for disposal of waste in accordance with applicable law.

1. Dispose of all sharp objects contaminated with blood and bodily fluids by placing them in an appropriate puncture-resistant, sealable container. Sharps containers can be sealed with heavy-duty tape.
2. Place other waste inside garbage bags and dispose as ordinary trash.
3. Commercial property owners should contact their waste removal or disposal company for proper hauling and disposal procedures. Homeowners can get information on disposal of bulky items at: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dsny/html/collection/bulk.shtml>
4. Homeowners should follow these steps to dispose of contaminated sharp objects from the home:
 - Place sharp objects in a puncture-resistant container and write "Home Sharps" on the container with a black permanent marker.
 - Dispose of the container in the trash if it is packaged safely and labeled correctly.

- Never place loose sharps in the trash and never place sharps containers in a recycling bin. NYC residents will not be penalized for placing a recyclable container containing sharps in their regular household garbage if the container is clearly marked "Home Sharps."

Hiring a Contractor

1. All property owners can find a company that is trained in cleaning up trauma scenes in the following ways:
 - Check the yellow pages or internet for "crime and trauma scene clean up". Online yellow pages are at: www.newyork.yellowpages.com.
 - Refer to the American Bio-Recovery Association (ABRA). ABRA is a nationwide non-profit association of crime and trauma scene recovery professionals. The ABRA website has information on service providers at: <http://americanbiorecovery.com/index.php>
2. A professional cleaning company must properly train its employees and follow federal regulations that protect employees working with blood or other bodily fluids. Here are some questions to ask a company before hiring them:
 - Does the company follow the Guidelines for Trauma Scene Management?
 - Have employees received bloodborne pathogen training?
 - Does the company have an exposure control plan?
 - Does the company have a procedure for handling waste from the clean-up?

References and Resources

1. OSHA Bloodborne Pathogen Standard:
http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=STANDARDS&p_id=10051
2. New York State Crime Victims Board: 55 Hanson Place 10th floor Brooklyn, NY 11217. Toll-free: 1-800-247-8035, phone: 718-923-4325, Fax: 718-923-4347. Hours: Monday-Friday, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm.

Property owners can apply to the New York Crime Victims Board for compensation of out-of-pocket expenses not covered by insurance or other resources. This includes up to \$2500 for crime scene clean-up. The Claim Application Form and Instructions can be found at: <http://www.cvb.state.ny.us/FormsandPublications/Forms.aspx>

- English application form:
http://www.cvb.state.ny.us/forms/English_NY_CVB_Enabled.pdf
- Spanish application form:
http://www.cvb.state.ny.us/forms/Spanish_NY_CVB_Enabled.pdf

For the locations and telephone numbers of all New York City Victim Assistance Programs, go to <http://www.cvb.state.ny.us/HelpforCrimeVictims/LocateaProgram.aspx>

Definitions

New York City Administrative Code §17-193 (a) provides the following definitions:

Trauma: any serious physical injury or death.

Trauma scene: any area where a trauma occurred that has been visibly contaminated by human blood or bodily fluids as a result of such trauma; for example: automobile accident, criminal action, falls or other accidents, etc.

Trauma scene management: use of procedures and materials sufficient to clean and decontaminate a trauma scene and safely remove human blood or bodily fluids and contaminated waste.

Other definitions:

Bloodborne pathogens: pathogenic microorganisms that are present in human blood and can cause disease in humans. These pathogens include, but are not limited to, hepatitis B virus (HBV) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Other potentially infectious material (OPIM): other human body fluids that could potentially contain pathogenic microorganisms, any human body fluid that is visibly contaminated with blood, any unfixed tissue or organ (other than intact skin) from a human being (living or dead).

Occupational exposure: contact with blood or OPIM to the skin, eye, or mucous membrane resulting from the performance of an employee's duties.

Personal protective equipment: specialized clothing or equipment worn by an employee for protection against a hazard. Personal protective equipment appropriate for handling human blood, OPIM and bloodborne pathogens includes gloves, eye protection and coveralls that are impermeable to such materials. General work clothes (e.g., uniforms, pants, shirts or blouses) not intended to function as protection against a hazard are not considered to be personal protective equipment.

Universal precautions: is an approach to infection control. According to the concept of Universal Precautions, all human blood and certain human body fluids are treated as if known to be infectious for HIV, HBV, and other bloodborne pathogens.