

Workplace Injury and Exposure to Infectious/Environmental Hazards in the Clinical Setting for Learners in the Faculty of Health Sciences

Introduction

The Faculty of Health Sciences is committed to promoting Occupational Health & Safety for its learners and facilitating appropriate support for learners who become injured or exposed to infectious or environmental hazards during the course of their studies or clinical training. The Faculty of Health Sciences, in collaboration with its affiliated teaching hospitals believes that a robust Occupational Health & Safety education program for learners, as well as staff and faculty, will reduce the risk of injury and hazardous exposure. In the event that an injury or exposure to an infectious or environmental hazard does occur, compliance with the procedures outlined in this document will ensure that learners receive appropriate support, treatment and follow-up and that all required documentation of the incident is completed and forms forwarded to the appropriate individuals and authorities.

Definitions

Learner is defined by the [Workplace Safety and Insurance Board](#) as an individual who is placed by a training agency with an employer to obtain work skills and experience. For the Faculty of Health Sciences, this definition extends to all undergraduate and graduate learners, including those on visiting electives, except for Post Graduate Medical Residents (Residents are paid employees of Hamilton Health Sciences and their process is outlined in the PGME Health and Personal Safety Policy).

Supervisors are health care providers who have taken on the responsibility to guide, observe and assess the educational activities of learners

This Policy describes the roles and responsibilities of individuals involved in dealing with infectious/environmental hazards exposure. The document is divided into 4 sections:

- A) Education for prevention
- B) Financial responsibility
- C) Required documentation and administrative responsibilities following an injury/exposure
- D) Detailed procedures in the event of an injury/exposure
 - a. Responsibilities of learners
 - b. Responsibilities of supervisors
 - c. Responsibilities of health professionals who provide initial care
 - d. Responsibilities of FHS Safety Office (FHSSO)
 - e. Responsibilities of McMaster University Employee Health Office (EHS)
 - f. Responsibilities of follow up health care providers
 - g. Responsibilities of the education programs/schools

Flowchart/ Decision Making

Mandatory Safety Education for Prevention

In order to ensure learners are adequately informed about safe practices in the health care environment, an education program has been developed by the FHSSO and the Joint Hospital University Learner Safety

Committee (JHULSC) consisting of a number of mandatory modules some of which may be delivered in person but many of which will be available as e-learning modules.

This policy requires that learners document that they have successfully completed all of the mandatory modules that include the safety and hazard topics detailed below. The basic safety education and training educational elements for learners in the Faculty of Health Sciences are available on the FHS Learners Safety Education webpage accessible through the FHSSO webpage. Basic safety education includes:

1. Infection Prevention and Control Core Competencies
2. WHMIS
3. Fire safety
4. Ergonomics
5. Workplace violence
6. Slips, Trips and Falls
7. N95 Respirator Training/Fit Testing
8. Emergency Code Preparedness Awareness
9. Infection Prevention and Control
10. Incident Reporting and Risk Evaluation of Exposures
11. Overview of Health and Safety Legislation
12. Radiation Safety

Learners can download a Learner Education Training Record from the Safety Education website to record the dates of education and training. A quiz, included with each of the safety education programs described above, must be completed by the learner and submitted to the FHSSO for verification of a passing grade. The program offices will be responsible for ensuring their students have completed the mandatory safety education components for placement in the clinical setting.

E-learning modules, developed by Public Health Ontario will be made available and are required. These include but are not limited to: 1. Occupational Health and Safety 2. Chain of Transmission and Risk Assessment 3. Health Care Provider Controls. These are listed as core competencies.

Learners are required to receive site specific training around personal protective equipment, infection control, scrub training where relevant and general orientation to the education topics listed earlier at each training site. On-site training is the responsibility of the clinical placement site.

Financial Responsibility

Learners who are injured or exposed to an infectious/environmental hazard while participating in either a core or required elective rotation in the clinical setting are eligible for coverage of claims at no cost to the learners. This coverage is provided either by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) or ACE INA (a private insurer) depending on whether the site of the incident is a participant in a WSIB program or not. While learners who are injured or suffer an exposure while not participating in a required clinical rotation are not eligible to submit a claim to WSIB or ACE INA, they may seek compensation through the McMaster Student's Union Health and Dental Plan, or their own disability insurance provider if they have arranged the coverage. All learners are encouraged to consider purchasing disability insurance in every year of their educational program, not only to cover the costs of incidents that occur outside required clinical training, but also to provide broader financial support for those incidents that are in fact covered by WSIB. All costs that arise from injury or exposure to infectious/environmental hazards that are not covered by the WSIB or private insurance will be borne by the learner.

Required Documentation and Administrative Responsibilities Following an Injury/Exposure

Requirements and responsibilities will follow the direction of the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities strategic policy, “[Guidelines for Workplace Insurance for Postsecondary Students on Unpaid Work Placements](#)” Post Graduate Medical Education Trainees are employees of Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS), and will follow required documentation and administrative responsibilities as outlined in HHS policy.

Detailed Procedures in the Event of an Injury/Exposure

a. Flowchart - See Appendix A

b. Responsibilities of learners

If a FHS learner is injured or exposed to an infectious/environmental hazard in the clinical setting he/she will do the following:

1. Inform his/her supervisor/preceptor of the incident and make arrangements for transfer of patient care as appropriate.
2. Request from the supervisor/preceptor that consent be obtained from the source patient to draw a blood sample if the incident involved a needle-stick injury or hazardous exposure to blood or body fluids.
3. Within 1-2 hours, seek immediate treatment from:
 - a) Employee Health Office at the Clinical Site - during working hours or,
4. Local Emergency Room - if Employee Health Office is not available
5. Inform Employee Health Office staff or E.R. Physician that he/she is a McMaster learner on clinical placement.
6. Complete a [University Incident Form](#) and arrange for it to be sent to the FHSSO
7. Request that the WSIB Health Professional Report (Form 8) be completed, and obtain their copy
8. Identify for the initial health care provider who will be the counselling/follow-up care physician, if known
9. Report the incident to the education program administrator as soon as possible
10. Adhere to the course of treatment prescribed by the initial health care provider, including PEP and follow up appointments
11. Obtain follow-up care and/or support as appropriate (eg from own family physician or McMaster Student Wellness Centre)
12. Arrange with course/program directors for any accommodations or absences that may arise from the incident in accordance with program or university policies

In the event that the learner does contract an infection/communicable disease, he/she should share this information confidentially with his/her education program (eg. program administrator or program director) and follow their program’s guidelines.

c. Responsibilities of Supervisor

1. Be aware of safety concerns that may arise in the supervisor’s clinical setting

2. Ensure that both supervisor and learner are appropriately oriented to and informed of the safety procedures in the clinical setting
3. Use and role model appropriate preventative practices. Ensure that learners are using appropriate preventative practices.
4. Ensure their own health and safety training is current with respect to their clinical institution and McMaster University Policies
5. Inform appropriate program staff of incident
6. Immediately following a hazardous exposure, the supervisor will:
 - a. Assist the learner in accessing immediate medical care which may require learners to be excused from their immediate duties
 - b. Apply and follow any site-specific workplace injury protocol
 - c. Ensure, if appropriate, that the most responsible physician has obtained consent for samples to be drawn from the source patient in cases of exposure to blood or body fluids
 - d. Provide relevant incident and learner information to the responding physician in the event the learner is incapable of providing such information
7. Following safety occurrences, review practices and procedures that were followed prior to, during, and following such occurrences to ensure that learners are using safe practices and are appropriately supported in the case of a safety occurrence.

d. Responsibilities of health professionals who provide initial care

Health professionals providing initial care to a learner who has experienced an injury or exposure to blood or body fluids are responsible to:

1. Complete a local institutional incident report form and the WSIB Health Profession's Report (Form 8).
2. Provide a copy of the forms and any other relevant documentation to the learner.
3. Ensure that the learner has a mechanism for following up on health care advice, prescriptions, testing and counselling. This follow-up may normally be provided by the learner's primary healthcare provider or university-based health service providers.
4. Ensure copies of all blood test results from the learner and source patient will be sent to the identified counselling/follow up physician

e. Responsibilities of FHS Safety Office (FHSSO)

The FHSSO acts in an advisory capacity for FHS staff and learners. FHSSO will collaborate with the FHS education programs in developing and delivering occupational health and safety educational curriculum for all FHS learners. The FHSSO will:

1. Advise the Faculty of Health Sciences and provide leadership on the development and implementation of best practices in improving learner safety
2. Maintain a Learner Safety Webpage with relevant information on this policy and procedures in the event of an incident in the clinical setting, providing an easy access point of information for learners who sustain an injury and or exposure
3. Maintain learner safety education materials in compliance with legal and policy requirements, and consistent with the educational best practices and approaches of the Faculty of Health Sciences

4. Maintain a database of all learner occupational exposures or injuries in the Faculty of Health Sciences. At least annually, conduct regular analysis of exposure and injury data to identify trends in learner exposures and injuries and opportunities to improve learner safety
5. Provide annual reports to the education programs, HSEC and JHULSC, regarding the above analysis. Support education programs and the FHS in responding to learner safety data.
6. Make recommendations on corrective measures and/or education initiatives
7. In the event of an incident involving an FHS learner, the FHSSO will:
 - a. Support stakeholders in the interpretation and implementation of this policy and other policies and practices related to learner safety
 - b. Receive incident reports from supervisors and learners
 - c. Forward copies of incident reports to schools and programs along with any immediate recommendations or corrective actions required
 - d. Review the incident and where necessary follow up with clinical site and/or learner
 - e. Forward all documentation as required to Environmental and Occupational Health Support Services (EOHSS)
 - f. If appropriate arrange for completion of the Form 7 (WSIB) through McMaster Employee Health Services

f. Responsibilities of McMaster University Employee Health Office (EHS & EOHSS)

1. Review the documentation submitted regarding the incident and follow up with relevant individuals regarding any information required.
2. Submit the documentation to either WSIB or ACE-INA as appropriate.
3. Maintain a complete record of the incident involving the learner - including details of the type of incident, site of injury/exposure, date and details of the claim and whether the claim was submitted to WSIB or ACE-INA.
4. Provide data for annual reports as requested by FHSSO

g. Responsibilities of follow up Health Care Providers

Following an injury or exposure to blood or body fluids, the FHS learner will require health counselling and follow-up. The identified healthcare provider (e.g. McMaster Student Wellness Centre or learner's family physician) is expected to:

1. Liaise with the providers of initial care to obtain necessary information about the incident, and, in the case of exposure to blood or body fluids, obtain non-identifying test results on the source patient involved in the incident
2. Meet with the learner to counsel on the need for follow-up and initiate/continue any required treatment

h. Responsibilities of the education programs/schools

1. Provide a curriculum of occupational health and safety as advised by the FHSSO and the Joint Hospital University Learner Safety Committee, and ensure that all learners know required health and safety policies and procedures.
2. Track and record learner education and training
3. Ensure all learners meet the FHS
4. Health Screening Guidelines for pre-placement prior to entering the clinical setting

5. Provide an “easy to access” point of information for learners who sustain an injury/potential hazardous exposure
6. In the event of being notified of an incident of injury or exposure to blood or body fluids:
 - a. Make contact with the learner to assess his/her non-medical needs
 - b. Assist and support learners with completion of required documents
 - c. Support learners in ensuring that health care follow-up has been arranged where appropriate
7. To ensure adequate tracking and analysis of incidents:
 - a. Maintain a detailed record of each incident in liaison with the FHSSO
8. In the event that the learner does contract an infectious disease:
 - a. Meet with the learner to assess his/her needs
 - b. Arrange, with appropriate measures of health information confidentiality, for the relevant communicable diseases policies of the educational program to be enacted to advise both the learner and the education program on any required measures.

Approved: HSEC May 28, 2014

Appendix A

Faculty of Health Sciences Learner Experiences an injury or hazardous exposure in a clinical setting¹

Immediate Response

Learner: Begins first aid process/ Inform supervisor immediately/ Ensure transfer of patient or client care
Supervisor: Ensures student is aware of first aid procedures and knows where and how to receive health care/arrange transportation if required/notifies appropriate site and university staff of incident
Most Responsible Physician: obtains source patient consent for blood work²

0-2 Hours after incident

Onsite Occupational Health Office

Learner: report to the occupational health office

- Notify the FHS Safety Office and your program
- Have your student identification and immunization documentation ready
- Indicate to whom your results should be forwarded, i.e. family physician, Student Wellness Centre³
- Obtain a copy of page 2 of the Health Professional's Report (Form 8)

Health Care Provider- conducts risk assessment, orders further testing if necessary, prophylaxis, baseline serology. Completion of the [Form 8](#), Health Professional's Report

IF INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONSULT REQUIRED AND NOT AVAILABLE ONSITE, HHS Infectious Disease available for phone consult by paging 905 521-2100

After Hours or if no onsite Occupational Health Office

Learner: report to the closest emergency department.

- Notify the FHS Safety Office and your program
- Have your student identification and immunization documentation ready
- Indicate to whom your results should be forwarded, i.e. family physician, Student Wellness Centre³
- Obtain a copy of page 2 of the Health Professional's Report (Form 8)

Health Care Provider- conducts risk assessment, orders further testing if necessary, prophylaxis, baseline serology. Completion of the [Form 8](#), Health Professional's Report

IF INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONSULT REQUIRED AND NOT AVAILABLE ONSITE, HHS Infectious Disease available for phone consult by paging 905 521-2100

0-3 Days after incident

Learner: - Complete McMaster FHS Injury Incident Report and submit to the FHS safety office, along with page 2 of the Health Professional's Report, Form 8.
-Comply with treatment regimen/attend all follow up appointments and subsequent requests for documentation from WSIB

Follow up Health Care Provider – ensures receipt of and responds to all relevant documentation including source patient blood work/manages care of the learner

Supervisor: Completes, signs and submits Supervisor portion of the injury incident report for the university and the site

FHS Safety Office: follow up on incidents where necessary, forwards report to program office and Employee Health Services

Employee Health Services McMaster – Will act as WSIB Administrator, comply with WSIB requirements

Program Administrator: assesses and responds appropriately to student's non-medical needs. Support and encourage student to comply with completion of reports, treatment regimen and have a plan for follow up care.

1. a) If occurs in non-clinical setting

- Report incident to supervisor
- Determine if emergency or follow up medical care required
- Complete and submit FHS Injury Incident Report

b) If no exposure to blood or body fluids, testing of source patient is not required

2. If source patient refuses, through Ontario legislation, [Bill 105](#), an order can be made through the Medical Officer of Health to obtain testing and results.

3. Contact Information for Student Health Services

McMaster Campus – [Student Wellness Centre](#)

MUSC B101

(905) 525-9140 x27700

Fax: (905)546-0805

Niagara Campus - [Brock Health Services](#)

Harrison Hall

(905) 688-5550 x3243

Fax: (905) 688-6448

Waterloo Campus – [Waterloo Health Services](#)

(519) 888-4096

Fax: (519)