Bloodborne Pathogens

What are Bloodborne Pathogens?

- **Infectious microorganisms** found in:
  - Human blood
  - Many body fluids
  - Tissues that are not preserved
- **Can cause diseases in humans**.
- **The most common/serious examples**:
  - Hepatitis B Virus (HBV)
  - Hepatitis C Virus (HCV)
  - Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)
- **Transmitted** by other vectors (malaria).

How Might You be Exposed to Bloodborne Pathogens?

- **Needlestick or sharps injury** via a contaminated object.
- **Contact with infectious materials to the membranes** of the nose, eyes, or mouth; or broken skin.

A Bloodborne Pathogen on Your Skin is not Necessarily an Injury:

- **Intact skin** = fantastic barrier to blood
- Contact with another person's blood or fluids without your skin being cut or punctured does not, in itself, constitute an injury or illness.

Best Practices to Prevent Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens:

- **Use Universal Precautions:**
  - Treat all blood or other human body fluids as infectious.
  - Wear gloves when handling items, cleaning equipment, cleaning up spills, placing items into biohazard containers, or transporting containers.
  - Wear additional PPE (e.g., goggles) if splattering is possible.
  - Dispose of regulated waste in the red and labeled biohazard bags or sharps containers.
  - **Wash Your Hands** immediately after completing the task.
- **Follow the Work Practice Controls** as outlined in Section 7.6 of the STO Exposure Control Plan.
  - Section 7.6 includes instructions for proper glove use, and donning & doffing PPE.
- **Spill Cleanup Procedures** are in 7.8.
- **Proper Handling of Waste Containers:**
  - Never carry bags against your body.
  - Never compress the bag with your hands/body.
  - Double-bag if the 1st bag appears compromised.
  - Never reach inside of a sharps container.

If You Think That You Have Been Exposed:

- Wash the wound, or rinse/flush your mouth, eyes, nose.
- Contact your supervisor **immediately** so that proper medical attention can begin.

The Most Important Rule:

If It's Wet and It's Not Yours
then
Don't Get It On You!