

# Updated: Prevention of infection transmission to and from health care workers



## SAFETY INFORMATION 003/25

Issue date:	11 March 2025
Content reviewed by:	Health Protection NSW
Distributed to:	Chief Executives; Directors of Clinical Governance; Director, Regulation and Compliance Unit
KEY MESSAGE:	Staff health services should ensure all health care workers (HCWs) are compliant with NSW Health Policy Directive <u><a href="#">PD2024_015 Occupational Assessment, Screening and Vaccination Against Specified Infectious Diseases</a></u> and remind those who perform exposure prone procedures of their obligations.
ACTION REQUIRED BY:	Clinicians, Staff Health
REQUIRED ACTION:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Distribute this Safety Information to all relevant clinicians and clinical departments.</li> <li>2. Audit staff who have been granted temporary compliance with <u><a href="#">NSW Health Policy Directive PD2024_015 Occupational Assessment, Screening and Vaccination Against Specified Infectious Diseases</a></u> to ensure compliance is completed.</li> <li>3. Remind all health care workers who perform exposure prone procedures of their responsibilities under <u><a href="#">Australian national guidelines for the management of healthcare workers living with blood borne viruses and health care workers who perform exposure prone procedures at risk of exposure to blood borne viruses 2019</a></u>.</li> </ol>
We recommend you also inform:	Directors, Managers and Staff of: Surgical, medical, emergency and obstetric departments.
Website:	<a href="https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/sabs/Pages/default.aspx">https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/sabs/Pages/default.aspx</a> <a href="http://internal.health.nsw.gov.au/quality/sabs/index.html">http://internal.health.nsw.gov.au/quality/sabs/index.html</a>
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## What is updated in the Safety Information from SI: 001/25?

Information for persistent hepatitis B vaccine non-responders has been included.

### Situation

Under NSW Health Policy Directive PD2024\_015 Occupational Assessment, Screening and Vaccination Against Specified Infectious Diseases some health care workers (HCWs) may be offered temporary compliance for the timeframe specified within the document. Temporary compliance can be offered for HCWs requiring a course of hepatitis B vaccination, measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) and/or varicella vaccination or to meet the tuberculosis (TB) clinical review and follow up requirements. Workers with temporary compliance are susceptible to the relevant infection and are at risk of acquiring the infection in their workplace and then transmitting the infection to others, including patients.

Under the Australian national guidelines for the management of healthcare workers living with blood borne viruses and health care workers who perform exposure prone procedures at risk of exposure to blood borne viruses (the National Guidelines), HCWs who perform exposure prone procedures must be tested for BBV infections at least once every three years and after a potential occupational or non-occupational exposures.

HCWs who are living with a BBV who perform exposure prone procedures must adhere to the requirements of the National Guidelines to prevent BBV transmission to patients. HCWs must declare whether they comply with the National Guidelines upon initial and annual registration with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulatory Authority (AHPRA).

The NSW Health Policy Directive PD2019\_026 Management of health care workers with a blood borne virus and those doing exposure prone procedures outlines how the National Guidelines must be implemented by all NSW Health local health districts and networks.

Persistent hepatitis B non-responders (as specified in the Australian Immunisation Handbook) are to be considered compliant and do not require a CE exemption or reassignment but must be managed in accordance with the Risk Management Framework under Appendix 2 of PD2024\_015. Non-responders must:

- Follow the requirements of the NSW Health Policy Directive HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C – Management of Health Care Workers Potentially Exposed (PD2017\_010) in the event of a potential exposure.
- Adhere to the testing requirements of PD2019\_026, if undertaking exposure prone procedures.
- Understand the management in the event of exposure includes hepatitis B immunoglobulin within 72 hours of parenteral or mucosal exposure to the hepatitis B virus.

### Assessment

Adherence to the NSW Health policy directives and the National Guidelines will reduce the risks of transmission of infections to and from HCWs in the workplace.

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## Recommendations

1. Audit any staff who have been granted temporary compliance with NSW Health Policy Directive PD2024\_015 Occupational Assessment, Screening and Vaccination Against Specified Infectious Diseases and ensure compliance is completed.
2. Remind all health care workers who perform exposure prone procedures of their responsibilities under the National Guidelines.
3. Local health districts and networks and health facilities should ensure that advice in PD2019\_026 is implemented.