

AIDS POLICY

POLICY

This policy provides guidance to Department of Labor employees in dealing with work situations involving staff who have or are perceived to be at risk of acquiring either of the following:

- Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)
- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Infection

The term "AIDS" as used in this policy should be understood as encompassing either of the above.

DEFINITIONS

- **Acquired Immune deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).** An acquired illness of the immune system that reduces the body's ability to fight certain types of infection and cancer.
- **Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).** The specific retrovirus that causes AIDS, which destroys part of the body's immune system and makes it susceptible to life-threatening, opportunistic infections or rare cancers.
- **Infectious Body Fluids.** Fluids known to contain significant amounts of HIV and capable of transmitting it: blood, semen, vaginal fluids, fluids that contain visible or significant amounts of blood, and tears, saliva, urine and feces that do not contain blood, but are considered infectious when unusual or prolonged contact occurs.
- **Blood and Body Fluid Precautions.** The procedures taken to prevent infections that are transmitted by direct or indirect contact with infectious body fluid.
- **Significant Risk of Transmission.** Sexual activity involving the transfer of one person's semen, or vaginal or cervical secretions to another, or the sharing of needles during intravenous drug use.
- **Significant Exposure.** A parenteral exposure, such as a needle stick or cut, a mucous membrane exposure, such as a splash to the eye or mouth; or a cutaneous exposure, involving large amounts of blood or prolonged contact with blood, especially when the exposed skin is chapped, abraded or afflicted with dermatitis.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Department of Labor recognizes its obligation to provide a safe and healthy work environment and to assure fair, non-discriminatory treatment of all employees. Therefore, it is the policy of the agency that individuals with AIDS will be treated with the same compassion and consideration given to any other employee with a health problem. No person will be treated differently in the workplace as a result of having or being perceived as having AIDS.

Present or prospective employees will not be tested for the presence of the AIDS virus for the purpose of assessing their ability to be employed or continue to be employed at the

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Department of Labor.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Efforts have been and will be made to offer all Department of Labor employees information about AIDS which is comprehensive, factual, understandable, direct, age and group appropriate, culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate. Other AIDS education will be provided to Department of Labor employees as appropriate. This information and education is designed to reduce prejudice and discrimination against persons with or perceived to have AIDS. It also assists employees to lower their personal risk of becoming infected with the AIDS virus.

It is important to remember that, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, there is no risk of an individual becoming infected with AIDS in a workplace such as the Department of Labor. Thus, agency employees are expected to work with co-workers and any other individuals who have AIDS. Managers and supervisors should be sensitive to employee concerns about the transmission of AIDS in the workplace and assist in informing and educating employees about the methods of transmission. Department of Labor employees who still have unwarranted fears of exposure to the virus in the workplace however, will not be allowed to refuse to work with anyone with AIDS.

A Department of Labor employee with AIDS can continue to work as long as he or she can perform job duties satisfactorily. Managers and supervisors will make reasonable accommodations in job assignments to the employee's medical condition and, with the employee's permission, inform the Department of Labor's director of human resources in a confidential manner of any such arrangements.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The identity of Department of Labor employees with AIDS will remain confidential. If any AIDS-related information (such as HIV counseling and testing or AIDS-related medical information, records or diagnosis) about a Department of Labor employee is received at the agency, such information will be maintained by the Department of Labor's director of human resources in a locked file, apart from the employee's personnel file.

Disclosure of such information will be made *only* with the authorization of the individual employee. Any unauthorized disclosure of such material by any employee of this agency will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

This policy is intended to be consistent with the Connecticut AIDS Testing and Confidentiality Law of 1989.

CONTACT PERSON

The human resources unit is the designated agency contact for questions concerning this

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AIDS policy. The director of human resources will consult, as necessary, on issues or questions concerning workplace safety and AIDS with the AIDS section of the Department of Public Health and Addiction Services.