



# **Ebola and Other Infection Control & Response Guidelines for Hotels**

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*This document has been compiled by The Garvy Group, Inc. and Aon Risk Solutions (Aon) in support of hotel clients, and is available as a reference document to American Hotel Lodging Association (AHLA) member hotels.*

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*Moreover, it cannot be assumed that every acceptable safety procedure is contained herein, or that abnormal or unusual circumstances may warrant or require further or additional procedures on your part.*

*You are in the best position to understand your business and your organization and to take steps to minimize risk, and we attempt to assist by offering the information and tools in this document*

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## Overview

Hotels have long had in place Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Control Plans and are familiar with the recommended procedures for dealing with numerous infections. Ebola virus disease, also known as Ebola hemorrhagic fever is a severe, often-fatal disease caused by infection with a species of Ebola virus. The increasing attention being devoted to the Ebola virus creates an opportunity to review those procedures and to consider supplementing them to help deal with the possibility of Ebola infection.

Although Ebola is rare, it can spread from person to person, especially among health care staff and other people who have close contact with an infected person.

Persons could be infected if they come into contact with blood or body fluids from someone who is sick or has died from Ebola, sick rainforest wildlife, or meat from an infected animal. Ebola infections may result due to consumption of wild “bush meat” (e.g., chimpanzees, bats, etc.) in certain parts of Africa. Health care providers caring for Ebola patients and family and friends in close contact with an ill person are at highest risk because they may come into contact with blood or body fluids.

Ebola is spread through direct contact with blood or body fluids (including, but not limited to, feces, vomit, urine, breast milk, semen, saliva and sweat) of an infected person or animal or through contact with objects that have been contaminated with the blood or other body fluids of an infected person.

The incubation period, from exposure to when signs or symptoms appear, for Ebola ranges from 2 to 21 days (most commonly 8-10 days). Early symptoms include sudden fever, severe headaches, and muscle aches. Rashes, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, and diarrhea may follow. Symptoms can become increasingly severe and may include bleeding inside and outside the body, and multi-organ failure.

The prevention of Ebola virus infection includes measures to avoid contact with blood and body fluids of infected individuals and with objects contaminated with these fluids.

On August 8, 2014, the Ebola outbreak in West Africa was declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) because it was determined to be an ‘extraordinary event’ with public health risks to other countries. The possible consequences of further international spread are particularly serious considering the following factors:

1. the virulence of the virus,
2. the intensive community and health facility transmission patterns, and
3. the strained health systems in the currently affected and most at-risk countries.

Coordinated public health actions are essential to stop the spread of Ebola virus. Due to the complex nature and seriousness of the outbreak, CDC has created guidance for monitoring people exposed to Ebola virus and for evaluating their travel, including the application of movement restrictions when indicated.

## Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide hotels with practical measures to protect employees and guests in the event that an employee and/or guest becomes ill with a possible contagious infection, including Ebola, though much of the information contained herein also applies to other respiratory, gastrointestinal, and bloodborne diseases. It is important to note that adhering to your property's Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Control Plan should provide a good platform upon which to address

Ebola; as such, this guidelines document creates heightened awareness of, and underscores the value of, the hotel's Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Control Plan.

In order to limit the risk of infection for employees and guests, hotels should routinely review their property-specific Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Control Plan. This should include, at a minimum, identifying positions with an exposure to blood and other potentially infectious material; employee training; Hepatitis B vaccinations; universal precautions; administrative and work practice controls; personal protective equipment; and response to incidents involving blood, body fluid and other potentially infectious material based upon the nature of the incident. Consistent review of these programs and their implementation at your property may assist during more routine tasks, as well as provide guidance in the event of exceptional circumstances or incidents.

Whether an illness is contagious may not be known at the time. As a result, any body fluid (blood, vomit, urine, feces, sweat, semen, breast milk, etc.) must be treated as potentially infectious.

### **Illness Categories**

For the purposes of comparison and as a reminder of important information on other illnesses, descriptions of illnesses other than Ebola are included below.

To avoid exposing others, hotel employees who are ill with a contagious infection should not report to work until they have recovered. Employees who develop symptoms consistent with a contagious infection should discontinue their work duties as soon as it is safe to do so. Employees with respiratory or gastrointestinal symptoms should not prepare or serve food or beverages.

#### Respiratory Infections

**Symptoms:** Germs (viruses or bacteria) in the respiratory system (such as measles, tuberculosis, influenza, whooping cough, or some pneumonias) can cause symptoms including coughing, sneezing, fever, rash, and difficulty breathing.

**How infection spreads:** Coughing, sneezing, or even singing or talking may spread respiratory germs. Depending on what is causing the infection, germs may be spread when another person inhales them from droplets or aerosols expelled into the air by a cough or sneeze. Another way of spreading these germs is by touching contaminated surfaces with your hands, then touching your mouth, eyes, or nose, before washing your hands. Some infections, such as tuberculosis (TB), do not spread easily without close and prolonged contact, while others, such as measles, can be transmitted after brief contact.

#### Gastrointestinal Infections

**Symptoms:** Germs in the stomach or intestines, such as norovirus, can cause symptoms including nausea, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, or fever.

**How infection spreads:** Vomiting or diarrhea may spread germs to surfaces that other people may touch and then touch their mouth with contaminated hands. Infection may also be spread through contaminated food or liquids, for example, if an ill person prepares food or drink for other people.

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## Bloodborne Infections

**Symptoms:** Certain infections, such as HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B and C, are carried in the bloodstreams of infected people. A person with one of these infections may have symptoms such as jaundice (a yellow appearance of the skin or white parts of the eyes) in the case of hepatitis B or C; or, in the case of hemorrhagic fevers, unexplained bleeding of the skin, eyes, or gums. However, a person with some of these diseases may not have any symptoms at all, yet still be contagious.

**How infection spreads:** Some of these infections can be spread when body surfaces that can easily absorb blood-borne pathogens, such as open cuts, scrapes, or mucous membranes (lining of mouth, eyes, or nose) come into direct contact with infectious bodily fluids.

## Ebola Virus Disease

**Symptoms:** Fever (greater than 38.6 C or 101.5 F), severe headache, muscle pain, weakness, diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal (stomach) pain, unexplained hemorrhage (bleeding and bruising).

**How infection spreads:** Through direct contact (through broken skin or mucous membranes in, for example, the eyes, nose, or mouth) with: blood or body fluids (including, but not limited to, urine, saliva, sweat, feces, vomit, breast milk and semen) of a person who is sick with Ebola; Objects (like needles and syringes) that are contaminated with the virus; Infected animals. Ebola is not spread through the air or by water, or in general, by food\*.

\* Ebola infections may result due to consumption of wild “bush meat” (e.g. chimpanzees, bats, etc.) in certain parts of Africa.

## **Prevention, Preparation & Infection Control Measures**

### Corporate Level Preparation & Response

- Internal crisis communication, notification and escalation process
- Legal counsel
- Public Relations (including sales & marketing) including:
  - Local and national media response plans for affected and non-affected properties and corporations;
  - Notification of current and future room night reservations, sales, catering and meeting and other business contracts;
  - Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) & travel review site monitoring and response management
  - Outside medical and industrial hygiene consultation assistance
  - Information hotline/website for employee and guest information, inquiries and concerns
- Human Resources including attendance policy regarding illness reporting and EAP for affected employees and their families; and non-affected employees

- Risk Management & Claims
- Insurance brokers and carrier(s); verify that Ebola and Ebola-related incidents are perils covered under workers' compensation, general liability, property and business interruption policies
- Hotel Ownership notification
- Verify and establish local and Federal medical authority notification procedures as required
- Adhere to OSHA notifications as required by State and/or Federal standards
- Obtain information from local and federal health authorities, emergency medical, law enforcement and local hospitals regarding their levels of response including potential quarantine, isolation, etc.
- Post incident recovery

#### Property Level / Operations Preparation & Response

- Provide information and education regarding disease, symptoms, prevention, reporting and incident response
- Revisit your property's Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Control Plan, including blood and body fluid pathogen awareness, universal precautions, and personal protective equipment training for employees and contractors
- Review or implement recordkeeping policies for the following: (the following records should be maintained for a minimum of 90 days)
  - Guest registration information
  - Health club, fitness center & spa registration/sign-in logs
  - Employee payroll/schedule records
  - Employee work assignments: housekeeping room & turndown attendants, supervisors, inspectors, housemen; bellmen; valet parking; engineering including preventative maintenance and work orders; room service; mini-bar, etc.
  - Internal and external laundry handling procedures, including tracking and chain of custody for outside laundry services
  - Waste disposal processes
  - Key control procedures including documenting assignment of keys to employees and key log record retention
  - CCTV record keeping procedures including retention and disposition of recorded media.
  - Lost and found procedures including retention and disposition of found and unclaimed property.
  - Documented guest room and other electronic lock interrogation procedures and record retention
  - Luggage tag and valet parking ticket inventory and retention
- Conduct an inventory of personal protective equipment and other bio-hazard response supplies and equipment.
- Establish, and/or verify availability of outside service contractor agreements in the event of an Ebola-related incident:
  - Security staffing: perimeter protection, crowd, media and property access control
  - Cleaning / restoration contractor
  - Food and beverage suppliers
  - Laundry, linen, FF&E, etc. suppliers
  - Medical services and industrial hygiene services & consultation
  - Evacuation
  - Disinfection

- Verify and establish local and Federal (CDC) health authority notification procedures as required
- Adhere to OSHA notifications as required by State and/or Federal standards
- Obtain information from local and federal health authorities, emergency medical, law enforcement and local hospitals regarding their levels of response including potential quarantine, isolation, etc.

#### Training & Preparation Assessment

- Provide information for employees regarding Ebola including symptoms, reporting and hotel and company's incident response plan(s). Information should include and reference your property's Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Control Plan, including blood and body fluid pathogen exposure control, universal precautions, and personal protective equipment (PPE) use for employees, with particular attention to universal precautions and PPE for employees with emphasis on housekeeping (especially toilets and bathrooms), laundry, waste disposal and engineering employees.
- Conduct comprehensive property and operations assessment/audit to determine adequacy of supply of personal protective equipment; cleaning supplies and equipment; sharps containers, bio-hazard spill kits and bio-hazard bags. Consider additional supply of bio-hazard spill kits and bio-hazard bags, gloves, eye and face protection for employees and guests in the event of an incident/outbreak involving potentially infectious material.
- Conduct assessment of emergency supplies such as water and food stock in the event local authorities quarantine the property, employees and guests, and restrict egress in and out of property. Consider additional supply of water and other non-perishable items in the event of imposed quarantine/isolation.

#### General Personal Protective Measures

- Practice Universal Precautions - **treat all body fluid and all traces of bodily fluid, dried or liquefied, and all bodily waste , dried or liquefied, as though it is infectious**
- Hand hygiene is the single most important infection control measure. Hands can transmit infectious material (for example saliva or other body fluids that may contain viruses) to the mouth, nose or eyes, where there is a direct route of entry into the body. Hand washing is an important way to reduce the potential for the transmission of infectious diseases. Running water and non-abrasive hand soap must be used for at least 30 seconds when washing. It is important to dry hands either mechanically or with disposable toweling after washing. Hand washing must be performed:
  - Before wearing and after removing gloves
  - After contact with blood, body fluids or other potentially infectious material or people
  - Before and after housekeeping activities
  - After using the bathroom/restroom
  - After blowing/wiping your nose
  - Before eating and/or preparing food
- Employees must avoid touching their own eyes, noses and mouths until they have washed their hands. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer products may be used to clean hands. However, they must not be used as a substitute for hand washing. To help encourage good hygiene practices, hand sanitizing products (for example dispenser or individual packets) must be located within the break



rooms and employee cafeteria settings. In addition, hotels must supply housekeeping service carts with hand sanitizing products (for example dispenser or individual packets) to help encourage good hand hygiene practices.

- Disposable gloves (*gloves do not replace proper hand hygiene*)
  - Wear impermeable, disposable gloves when if you are working in an area with an ill person or may come in contact with body fluids (such as used tissues, blood, vomit, or diarrhea), potentially contaminated surfaces or lavatories.
  - Remove gloves carefully to avoid contaminating yourself or your clothing.
  - Properly dispose of soiled gloves after use into a plastic bag, and do not re-use.
  - Wash your hands with soap and water or with an alcohol-based hand cleaner after removing gloves.

#### Routine Housekeeping Practices & Personal Protective Measures

- Room and turndown attendants, housemen, supervisors and other housekeeping employees should wear personal protective equipment (PPE) recommended in your property's Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Control Plan and Safety Data Sheets (SDS). Based on the nature of the task, this may include impermeable disposable gloves, eye and face protection to protect against direct skin and mucous membrane exposure of cleaning chemicals, contamination, and splashes or spatters during environmental cleaning and disinfection activities in guest rooms and bathrooms.
- Wipe down lavatory surfaces and frequently touched surfaces in the guest room such as door knobs and handles, desks, tables, desk chairs, lights and air controls, alarm clock radios, television remote controls windows and mirrors with an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered cleaner/disinfectant that has been tested and approved for use.
- Special cleaning of upholstery, carpets, or storage compartments is not necessary unless they are obviously soiled with blood or body fluids.
- Dispose of used gloves according to your hotel's recommended infection control precautions when cleaning is done or if they become soiled or damaged during cleaning.
- Clean hands with soap and water (or waterless alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap is not available) immediately after gloves are removed.

#### Bloodborne Pathogen and Other Potentially Infected Material (OPIM) Incident

- Upon finding or being notified of potentially infectious material in any area of the property including guest rooms and/or public areas, follow your property's bloodborne pathogen emergency response protocols. This may include the use of an outside contractor with specialized expertise and experience in bloodborne pathogen and infectious material cleaning, mitigation, removal and restoration.
- If fabric, furniture or carpet is obviously soiled with blood or body fluids, it should be removed and discarded by the methods used for bio-hazardous material.
- Any employee entering the area should wear at least:
  - Gloves

- Eye and face protection
- Additional personal protective equipment may be required based upon the nature of the incident.
  - If reusable heavy-duty gloves are used for cleaning and disinfecting, they should be disinfected based on manufacturer's recommendations.
  - Employees should be trained in the proper use of personal protective equipment including safe removal to prevent contaminating themselves or others in the process, and that contaminated equipment is disposed of appropriately.
- All soiled material including cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment are to be placed in red, leak-proof, bio-hazard bags and discarded appropriately.
- To minimize contamination of the exterior of the waste bag, place this bag in a rigid waste receptacle designed for this use.
- If disposal requires transport offsite then this should be done in accordance with the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Hazardous Materials Regulations. Guidance from DOT has been released for Ebola.
- If notified that the potentially infectious material (PIM) may have originated from an individual suspected of having or diagnosed with a contagious illness, including Ebola, notify your supervisor and hotel management prior to taking any action.
- The Ebola virus is classified as a Category A infectious substance by and regulated by the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Hazardous Materials Regulations. Any item transported offsite for disposal that is contaminated or suspected of being contaminated with a Category A infectious substance must be packaged and transported in accordance with the HMR. This includes medical equipment, sharps, linens, and used health care products (such as soiled absorbent pads or dressings, used Personal Protection Equipment such as gowns, masks, gloves, goggles, face shields, respirators, booties, etc.; or byproducts of cleaning contaminated or suspected of being contaminated with a Category A infectious substance).

### **Exposure / Illness Incident Response**

For any incident where Ebola has been indicated or identified at a hotel property, employees are required to notify their supervisor and/or hotel management immediately and the property management will immediately initiate the corporate crisis management communication plan.

It is likely that local and Federal health officials and law enforcement officials will exercise authority for management of an incident at your property in the event of a suspected or actual diagnosis of Ebola affecting an employee and/or guest.

Provide whatever support and assistance to officials that may be requested or possible, consistent with corporate guidance.

Follow property-level incident response policies and procedures as possible and permitted by authorities having jurisdiction over the incident.

If it is suspected that a guest room may be contaminated with Ebola virus, under no circumstances should an employee enter the room until it is cleared and released by the appropriate authorities.



Employees should notify hotel management of any contact with a person diagnosed with Ebola so that the situation may be assessed and appropriate actions taken.

### Guest Illness

If a guest appears to exhibit symptoms of Ebola (such as fever, weakness, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea or bleeding or shortness of breath) and has a history of travel in the past 21 days to an area affected by Ebola, hotel management should be notified immediately and all employees isolated immediately. Upon notification, the hotel management team should consider the elements below.

- Immediately initiate corporate crisis communication notifications
- Notify local health authorities
- Keep the sick person separated from others as much as possible until the Health Authorities arrive and takeover.
- Develop an isolation plan with assistance from the local health department and Risk Management.
- Be prepared to isolate a room or an area as instructed by the local health department. It is important to be both sensitive to the guest and ensure that other guests are **not** notified at this stage.
- Do not inform guests that it may be Ebola as this could cause alarm and panic. It is still suspected until a professional medical expert can diagnose through laboratory tests.
- Avoid any contact with the guest until the health officials arrive and take over.
- If an infected guest checks out, E-key or double lock the room
- The room shall be taken out of use until the appropriate health authorities deem it safe to be used
- Do not attempt to transport the guest to a health-care provider or any other location.
- If the ill guest is transported off property, the room is to be put on DND until the health authorities quarantine it and give consent to re occupy.
- Should an affected guest vacate the room, it should be put on out of order and the health officials notified.
- A log of all people entering the room must be maintained.
- General Manager to field inquiries of corporate personnel and media.
- No information is to be released regarding the guest name address, room number, etc. without proper authorization.
- Any external communication must be pre-approved by corporate communication and public relations prior to any release.
- Record all the details that were undertaken by the property further action and follow up.
- All soiled material including cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment are to be placed in red, leak-proof, bio-hazard bags and discarded appropriately.
- To minimize contamination of the exterior of the waste bag, place this bag in a rigid waste receptacle designed for this use.
- If disposal requires transport offsite then this should be done in accordance with the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Hazardous Materials Regulations. Guidance from DOT has been released for Ebola.

### Guest Property and Guest Room Furniture, Fixture, Equipment (FFE) & Linen Handling

No employee shall enter a guest room suspected of being contaminated with the Ebola virus. As such, no guest property, FFE, linen or sharps shall be removed until the appropriate health authorities have given their approval and all items of guest property are inventoried and recorded.

#### Guest Room Decontamination & Cleaning

Cleaning of potentially infected room should be done by the health authorities or professional contractors upon approval from health authorities.

#### **Employee Illness**

If an employee appears to exhibit symptoms of Ebola (such as fever, weakness, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea or bleeding) or shortness of breath and has a history of travel in the past 21 days to an area affected by Ebola, hotel management should be notified immediately and the employee isolated immediately. Upon notification, the hotel management team should consider the elements below.

- Immediately initiate corporate crisis communication notifications
- Notify local health authorities
- Keep the sick person separated from others as much as possible until the Health Authorities arrive and takeover
- Minimize the number of persons directly exposed to the ill person
- Keep interactions with the ill person as brief as possible
- Employees should alert the physician or the health department of the symptoms and suspicions before visiting health facilities.
- The General Manager or designee will handle any inquiries of staff and will monitor the condition of the allegedly infected staff member.
- General Manager to field inquiries of corporate personnel and media.
- Any external communication must be pre-approved by corporate communication and public relations prior to any release.

Any employee who thinks they were exposed to an infectious disease, including Ebola, either through assisting an ill employee or guest, handling a contaminated object, or cleaning a contaminated guestroom should be required to take the following actions:

- Notify your manager immediately
- Seek immediate medical attention after any contact in question if they develop symptoms that concern them (such as fever, rash, persistent cough, vomiting, or diarrhea).
- Monitor your health for 21 days
- Watch for symptoms of Ebola: fever (temperature of 101.5°F/38.6°C or higher), severe headaches, muscle pain, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, unexplained bleeding or bruising.

Employees who develop sudden onset of symptoms at home such as fever, intense weakness or muscle pains, vomiting, diarrhea, or any signs of hemorrhage after an unprotected exposure (i.e. not wearing recommended PPE at the time of person contact or through direct contact to blood or body fluids) to a person with a suspected or diagnosed infectious disease, including Ebola, should:

- Notify their supervisor, manager or hotel manager
- Not report to work or should immediately stop working
- Seek prompt medical evaluation and testing

- Before visiting a health care provider, alert the clinic or emergency room in advance about your possible exposure to Ebola so that arrangements can be made to prevent transmission to health care staff or other persons.
- When traveling to get medical care, limit your contact with other people. This includes avoiding public transportation. Avoid all other travel until you have been medically evaluated.
- Notify local and state health departments
- Comply with work exclusion until they are deemed no longer infectious to others

Asymptomatic employees who have had an unprotected exposure (i.e. not wearing recommended PPE at the time of person contact or through direct contact to blood or body fluids) to a person with suspected or diagnosed Ebola should:

- Receive medical evaluation and follow-up care including fever monitoring twice daily for 21 days after the last known exposure.
- Properties should consider policies ensuring at least twice daily contact with exposed employees to discuss potential symptoms and document fever checks
- May continue to work while receiving twice daily fever checks, based upon hotel policy and discussion with local, state, and federal public health authorities.

### **Communication**

- All questions related to the company must be directed to Corporate Communications. Ensure that all employees are aware of the health concerns. Provide regular updates.
- Continue communication with employees to update them on the situation.
- An emergency hotline should be set up to keep employees informed as situations unfold regarding the Ebola Virus outbreak and business operations. Employees must be encouraged to use the hotline or contact their supervisor for updates and information.
- A pre agreed verbiage should be made to handle all guests and corporate calls. All inquiries must be forwarded to the General Manager or designee. Do not release details of any affected guest or staff. Inquiries by the media and other third parties should be directed to Corporate Communications
- Obtain any current fact sheets or bulletins on the disease from the local health department. Consider requesting the local health department and refer questions about the Ebola Virus to the local health department.



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**For additional information and assistance, please contact:**

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