

Protecting Workers from Hepatitis A

Cal/OSHA – Title 8 Regulations

Subchapter 7. General Industry Safety Orders Group 16. Control of Hazardous Substances Article 109. Hazardous Substances and Processes

Employers whose employees may come into contact with blood and certain other human body fluids must comply with [title 8 section 5193](#).

Hepatitis A is a highly contagious liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus. It can range in severity from a mild illness lasting a few weeks to a severe illness lasting several months resulting in death. Hepatitis A is usually spread when a person ingests fecal matter—even in microscopic amounts—from contact with objects, food, or drinks contaminated by feces or stool from an infected person. For more information, please see the Centers for Disease Control [Hepatitis A fact sheet](#).

There are reports of hepatitis A outbreaks in San Diego, Santa Cruz and other California communities. Please see the respective health departments for further information:

- [San Diego \(hepatitis A information\)](#)
- [Santa Cruz \(hepatitis A information\)](#)

The following measures will help reduce the spread of hepatitis A in workplaces:

- **Maintain a clean and sanitary workplace.** Employers must clean and sanitize work areas contaminated by decaying waste such as fecal matter ([title 8 section 3362](#)). Employees should report any unsanitary conditions to their employer immediately.
- **Clean toilet facilities.** Employers must ensure that workplace restrooms are kept clean and sanitary ([title 8 section 1526 in construction](#) and [section 3364 for other workplaces](#)). Additional cleaning may be needed if persons outside of the workplace have used or have had access to workplace restrooms. The County of San Diego Department of Environmental Health has posted [Hepatitis A Disinfection Guidelines](#).

- **Provide hand washing facilities.** Employers must provide hand washing facilities at construction sites (*title 8 section 1527*) and at other worksites (*title 8 section 3366*). Employees should wash their hands with soap and water after using the bathroom, touching any object that may have been contaminated with fecal matter, and prior to eating, drinking, or smoking.
- **Provide appropriate personal protective equipment.** Employers must provide gloves and other necessary personal protective equipment to employees who clean up or otherwise come into contact with hazardous materials such as fecal matter (*title 8 sections 3380 and 3384*).¹ Employees should wash their gloves prior to removing them and then wash their hands after disposing of contaminated gloves.
- **Provide training.** Employers must provide training to employees when a new hazard is presented in the workplace (*title 8 section 1509 in construction and section 3203 for other workplaces*). For example, when a hepatitis A outbreak occurs that could affect employees, the employer must provide information and training to the employees on how hepatitis A is transmitted and how to prevent infection.¹ Employees should follow the training they are provided on how to prevent infection.
- **Offer hepatitis A vaccinations.** Employers whose employees have an increased risk of contact with the hepatitis A virus should work with their local health departments to offer hepatitis A vaccinations to the employees.

September 2017