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### NO GOOD DEED GOES UNPUNISHED...CAN "GOOD SAMARITANS" TRIGGER OSHA'S BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS STANDARD?

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Many companies that maintain first aid kits and AED (automated external defibrillator) units at their facilities do not assign specific employees to provide first aid/medical assistance in times of need. Rather, companies often leave this task to volunteers ("Good Samaritans") and do not include any such activities in an individual employee's job description. Generally speaking, this arrangement stays clear of OSHA's Bloodborne Pathogens Standard.

However, it is not necessarily that simple. In assessing whether the Bloodborne Pathogens Standard applies to employees providing first aid to others, OSHA views the likelihood that a first aid provider could have "occupational exposure" as a determining factor. The Bloodborne Pathogens Standard defines "occupational exposure" as "reasonably anticipated skin, eye, mucous membrane, or parenteral contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials that may result from the performance of an employee's duties." On this point, it is OSHA's position that individuals who perform first aid and CPR are "reasonably anticipated" to have exposure to blood and other potentially infectious materials.

Given the above, employers are wise to review certain factors closely when assessing whether this Standard applies to their operations. Coverage under this Standard can be a fact-specific inquiry and more questions should be asked, including the following:

1. Has the employer identified specific employees as being responsible for rendering medical assistance or designated them as first aid providers?
2. Are specific employees expected to render medical assistance/first aid?
3. Is the employer aware that specific employees routinely provide medical assistance/first aid?
4. Have specific employees been trained to provide medical assistance/first aid?

If the answer is "yes" to any of the above, then potential applicability of the Bloodborne Pathogens Standard deserves closer attention.

Coverage under this Standard can generate numerous requirements, including employee training, exposure control plans, personal protective equipment, vaccinations, post-exposure evaluations, medical record maintenance, and labels and signs. For more information about this Standard, please view [OSHA's Bloodborne FactSheet](#).

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