



Policy Title:

Student Exposure to Infectious and Environmental Hazards

Policy Identifier:

A3.05a-c

Prepared by: PA Program Faculty	Creation Date: 01/01/2026
Reviewed by: PA Program Executive Committee	Review Date: 01/01/2026
Approved by: PA Program Executive Committee	Effective Date: 01/01/2026
Category: Academic and Clinical Policies	

ARC-PA Standards

A3.05a-c

Scope

University of South Carolina (USC) School of Medicine Columbia PA students.

Policy Statement

All USC School of Medicine Columbia Physician Assistant (PA) students are required to adhere to CDC and OSHA infection control standards, including Universal Precautions, in all clinical and educational settings. The program provides clear procedures for immediate care, reporting, and follow-up in the event of an exposure to infectious or environmental hazards.

Reason for Policy

To ensure compliance with ARC-PA Standard A3.05a-c by establishing procedures for prevention, management, and follow-up of student exposure to infectious or environmental hazards. This policy is designed to promote student safety, minimize the risk of disease transmission, and ensure appropriate medical care following exposure.

Procedures

Methods of Prevention (A3.05a)

All students must follow Universal Standard Precautions when interacting with patients or potentially infectious materials. These include, but are not limited to:

- Use of barrier protection (gloves, gowns, masks, and eye protection) when contact with blood, body fluids, or mucous membranes is possible.
- Hand hygiene before and after every patient contact and after glove removal.
- Changing gloves between patients.
- Use of facial shields or goggles during procedures where exposure to eyes or mucous membranes may occur.
- Use of gowns or aprons when splashing or spraying of fluids may occur.



- Proper sharps handling—never recap, bend, or remove needles by hand; dispose of sharps immediately in designated containers.
- Use of safety-engineered devices for needles, syringes, and sharps whenever available.
- Avoid mouth-to-mouth resuscitation; use resuscitation masks or bags when performing CPR.
- Decontaminate all surfaces and instruments after use.

Failure to follow Universal Precautions constitutes unprofessional behavior and may result in disciplinary action.

Care and Treatment After Exposure (A3.05b)

Immediate Actions

If a student sustains a needlestick, sharps injury, or exposure to blood, body fluids, or other potentially infectious material, they must:

1. Wash affected skin with soap and water; flush mucous membranes with copious amounts of water.
2. Notify the supervising clinician or charge nurse immediately.
3. Seek medical evaluation immediately at the designated Employee/Student Health Office or Emergency Department.

Reporting Requirements

All exposure incidents must be reported within **24 hours** to:

- **USC SOMC Employee/Student Health Office**, and
- **Director of Clinical Education**

Columbia-Area Exposures

- Jennifer Evans, RN – (803) 216-3374 (office) | (618) 559-0419 (cell)
- Olabisi Badmus, MD, MPH – (803) 434-2206 | Pager: (803) 352-0576
- Family and Preventive Medicine Office – (803) 434-6113

After Hours, Weekends, or Holidays:

Report to Prisma Health Richland Emergency Department, then notify the Employee/Student Health Office as soon as possible.

Exposures at Dorn VA Medical Center (DVAMC)

- During working hours: Report to Employee Health Clinic, Building 22, Room 1B116 (Ext. 6530 or Pager 084)
- After hours: Report to Urgent Care or contact the Medical Officer of the Day (MOD) through the hospital operator.

Exposures Outside Columbia

- Follow the local facility's exposure policy.
- If unavailable, report to the nearest Emergency Department and contact USC SOMC Employee/Student Health Office and the PA Program as soon as feasible.

Post-Exposure Evaluation and Follow-Up

Following any exposure incident, the USC SOMC Employee/Student Health Office will coordinate confidential medical evaluation and follow-up, including:

- Documentation of exposure route, timing, and circumstances.
- Identification and testing of the source patient for HIV, HBV, and HCV (as permitted by law).
- Testing of the exposed student as indicated.
- Counseling regarding risk, testing, prophylaxis, and follow-up schedules.



- Administration of post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) as recommended by the U.S. Public Health Service.

All health information will be maintained in accordance with HIPAA and FERPA regulations, and will be kept confidential.

Financial Responsibility (A3.05c)

Students will **not be financially responsible** for costs associated with evaluation, prophylaxis, or follow-up care related to an exposure sustained during educational activities.

Contacts

Program Director
USC School of Medicine Columbia
Physician Assistant Program

History

Date of Change	Change
01/01/2026	Policy drafted into new template