



## Guidelines for Trauma Scene Management

A trauma scene is a place that is contaminated by human blood or bodily fluids following a traumatic incident, such as a car accident, a crime or a fall. In these cases, property owners are responsible for cleaning and restoring their property and for protecting workers and the public from bloodborne pathogens (microorganisms such as viruses that can cause disease).

The following guidelines help property owners and the public clean up trauma scenes safely by providing information about property owners' responsibilities, clean-up procedures, waste disposal and hiring a contractor. They reference existing laws and recommendations and are in compliance with §17-193 of the New York City Administrative Code.

### *Property Owners' Responsibilities*

1. Private and public property owners are responsible for clean-up if a traumatic incident takes place on their property.
2. Property owners who do not have employees to clean up should hire contractors (see the *Hiring a Contractor* section for more information).
3. Private and public property owners and professional contractors must comply with city, state and federal laws. All private employers must comply with the **Occupational Safety and Health Administration** (OSHA) Bloodborne Pathogens Standard (29CFR1910.1030) when cleaning up trauma scenes. Government agencies must also comply with this standard in accordance with the New York State Public Employees Safety and Health Act.

The Bloodborne Pathogen Standard requires that employers:

- Implement an Exposure Control Plan that identifies steps taken to protect workers and the public from bloodborne pathogens during trauma scene management
- Provide training for employees who may have contact with human blood and other bodily fluids
- Provide appropriate personal protective equipment (such as gloves, eye protection and impermeable coveralls)
- Offer Hepatitis B vaccination to all workers
- Record all contact with blood, other bodily fluids and potentially contaminated sharp objects, and offer follow-up medical attention if needed

Read the full **Bloodborne Pathogens Standard** at <https://www.osha.gov> (search for "bloodborne pathogen standard").

## *Clean-up Procedures*

When cleaning up a trauma scene, property owners and cleaning contractors must make sure that employees:

1. Restrict public access to the area (with caution tape or placards) until clean-up is complete
2. Wear personal protective equipment in accordance with the Exposure Control Plan
3. Place sharp objects that may be contaminated with blood or other bodily fluids (such as broken glass) in a “sharps container” (a puncture-resistant, sealable container) for disposal as medical waste
4. Clean hard surfaces with soap and water, a household bleach solution (1/3 cup of chlorine-based bleach in one gallon water) or a disinfectant registered by the **United States Environmental Protection Agency** (U.S. EPA). See <http://www.epa.gov> (search for “EPA-registered disinfectants”).
5. Clean personal items and items used in food preparation with soap, water and a household bleach solution, or throw them away if they can’t be cleaned
6. Clean reusable mops and rags with soap, water and a household bleach solution, or throw them away, if they can’t be cleaned
7. Wash hands and all exposed skin thoroughly with soap and water after clean-up
8. Remove personal protective equipment after clean-up and before leaving the work area
9. Decontaminate reusable equipment in accordance with the Exposure Control Plan

## *Waste Disposal*

In accordance with the law, **property owners** and **cleaning contractors** must:

1. Dispose of all sharp objects contaminated with blood and bodily fluids by placing them in a sharps container and sealing the container with heavy-duty tape
2. Place other waste inside garbage bags and dispose of as ordinary trash
3. Commercial property owners must contact their waste removal or disposal company for proper hauling and disposal

When disposing of contaminated sharp objects from the home, **homeowners** must:

1. Place sharp objects in a puncture-resistant container and write “Home Sharps” on the container with a black permanent marker
2. Dispose of the container in the trash once it is packaged safely and labeled correctly
3. Never place loose sharps in the trash and never place sharps containers in the recycling bin

Homeowners can find more information about disposal of bulky items at [nyc.gov](http://nyc.gov) (search for “bulk”).

### *Hiring a Contractor*

Cleaning companies must properly train employees and follow federal regulations that protect employees who work with blood or other bodily fluids. Here are some questions to keep in mind before hiring a company for a trauma scene clean-up:

- Does the company follow the Guidelines for Trauma Scene Management?
- Have employees received bloodborne pathogen training?
- Does the company have an exposure control plan?
- Does the company have a procedure for handling waste after clean-up?

To find a company that is trained in cleaning up trauma scenes, check the yellow pages or the internet for “crime and trauma scene clean-up” or contact the **American Bio-Recovery Association (ABRA)**, a nationwide non-profit association of crime and trauma scene recovery professionals. Visit the website at <http://americanbiorecovery.org>.

Property owners can apply to the **New York Office of Victim Services** for compensation (up to \$2,500) for out-of-pocket clean-up expenses not covered by insurance or other resources. Call 718-923-4325 for more information. The claim application form and instructions are available in English and Spanish at <http://www.ovs.ny.gov/forms.html>.