

CATHOLIC CHARITIES

**SELF-DIRECTED  
HOME CARE SERVICES**

**Basic Safety Precautions  
for Consumers and Workers**



**888-477-2263**

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## Basics of Worker/Consumer Confidentiality:

- Per Federal Law (HIPAA), a consumer's personal information, such as medical conditions, disability, and special needs, is considered protected health information. Workers must respect consumer privacy and protect this information by keeping it confidential.
- Workers may only exchange information about a consumer with the consumer's consent/ authorization.
- Workers must be aware of their surroundings and, only with authorization, share private information in secured spaces.

## Basics of Fraud Prevention:

- Time billed for services must reflect the actual time worked.
- Reports (action notes/progress notes) on services delivered must reflect the actual services provided.
- Services delivered must be part of the consumer's Plan of Care.
- Consumers and workers have an ethical responsibility to report suspicion of fraud or misconduct (insert info on who to report to).

## How to Prevent Theft While the Worker is in the Home:

- Be in the home when the work is being done. Keep the worker in sight.
- Don't leave valuables around, e.g. money, jewelry, prescription medications.
- Remember "identify theft". Don't send the worker to the store with your credit card. Don't leave information with your social security # on it where it can easily be seen.
- Don't accuse workers of stealing without proof.

## Basics of Universal Precautions:

- Universal Precautions – an approach to infection control that treats all blood and unidentifiable substances as if they were infected. USE GLOVES and or other personal protective equipment (mask, apron, etc.)
- HIV and Hepatitis B & C are viruses that can be transmitted from person to person through exposure to an infected person's blood or other potentially infectious materials (saliva contaminated with blood.)
- Advise the worker to wear gloves when it can be reasonably anticipated that they may come into contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials, e.g. cleaning the bathroom or doing laundry.
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- Hand washing is the #1 method of infection control. Workers must always wash their hands after taking off their gloves.
- When cleaning a surface contaminated with blood or other potentially infectious materials, workers must use chemicals that will destroy blood borne viruses. Some examples are:
  - Freshly mixed bleach & water solution (3 parts water and 1 part bleach). It is not effective if it was mixed over 24 hours prior.
  - Chemical agent registered against blood borne viruses. This information will be listed on the label of the chemical.
  - Typical contact time for the chemicals to be on the contaminated surface "soaking" is 10 minutes. Contact time for specialty agents may vary. See the original container for details.
- Used syringes and materials, if compressed, would drip with blood or other potentially infectious materials and are considered regulated waste. They must be disposed of in a special manner.
  - Needles must be placed in a medically approved container. If not available, an empty laundry detergent bottle labeled "SHARPS" would suffice. The container can be placed in the household trash.
  - Towels/clothing soaked with blood or other potentially infectious materials, when compressed, would drip and must be disposed of in a bio-hazard bag. The container can be placed in the household trash.
- Workers should never take clothing home that is soiled with blood or other potentially infectious materials. Suggest that they keep a spare set of clothing in their car for emergencies.

## Basics of Worker Safety and Body Mechanics:

- Stretching before, during, and after physical activity can reduce injuries caused by repetitive motion (bodily movement that is repetitious for extended periods of time).
- When lifting heavier items, it is important to lift from a squatting position versus bending and lifting with the back.
- Workers must know their limitations. Use good judgment in determining when assistance is needed.
- Try to avoid sharp, quick movements as these movements can create injury, especially in the neck and back.
- If injured while performing job responsibilities, this must be reported to the consumer.

## Basics of Safe Food Preparation:

- Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds before beginning food preparation and after handling raw meat, poultry, seafood, or eggs.
- Prevent juices from raw meat, poultry, or seafood from touching cooked foods or foods that will be eaten raw, such as fruits or salad ingredients.
- Wash counters, equipment, utensils, and cutting boards with soap and water immediately after use.
- Thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator, never on the counter. Or, thaw the food in a microwave oven, then cook it immediately.
- Marinate foods in the refrigerator, never on the counter. Discard the marinade after use because it contains raw juices. If you want to use the marinade as a dip or sauce, reserve a portion before you add the raw food.
- Always cook foods thoroughly. If harmful bacteria are present, only thorough cooking will destroy them. Freezing or rinsing foods in cold water is not sufficient to destroy bacteria.
- Use a meat thermometer to determine if your meat or poultry has reached a safe internal temperature. Check the product in several spots to assure that a safe temperature has been reached. To be safe, beef and pork must reach 160 degrees F (71 degrees C); whole poultry and poultry thighs, 180 degrees F (82 degrees C); and poultry breasts, 170 degrees F (77 degrees C).
- Avoid interrupted cooking. Never refrigerate partially cooked meat or poultry dishes to later finish cooking them on a grill or in the oven. Meat and poultry products must be cooked thoroughly the first time, and then they may be refrigerated and safely reheated later.
- When serving, keep hot foods hot--140 degrees F (60 degrees C) or higher--and cold foods cold--41 degrees F (5 degrees C) or lower.
- Never leave foods, raw or cooked, at room temperature for longer than two hours.