

Policy - Infection Control, Safety and Personal Security

Origin Date: October 28, 2013

Last Evaluated: April 2026

Responsible Party: Program Director

Minimum Review Frequency: Annually

Approving Body: Principal Faculty

MPAS Associated Forms: Notice of Incident Form

ARC-PA Associated Standards:

- **A1.02** The sponsoring institution is responsible for:
 - e) documenting security and personal safety measures for PA students, faculty, and staff in all locations where instruction occurs,
- **A3.05** The program publishes, makes readily available, and consistently applies policies addressing student exposure to infectious and environmental hazards before students undertake any educational activities that would place them at risk. Those policies:
 - a) address methods of prevention,
 - b) address procedures for care and treatment after exposure
 - c) clearly define financial responsibility.

Background and Purpose

To keep students, faculty, staff, preceptors and SCPE-sponsoring institutions current on program and University policies and procedures for exposure to bodily fluids, provider safety, and personal security.

Policy Statement

Policy on Safety and Infection Control

The safety of all students, faculty, staff, patients, and clinical personnel is of primary concern. PA students, staff, and faculty must adhere to all established High Point University safety policies and all Congdon School of Health Sciences safety policies. Didactic students must notify their course director as soon as possible of any exposure to bodily fluids or potentially serious infectious diseases. Clinical students must notify their clinical preceptor and the Director of Clinical Education as soon as possible of

any exposure to bodily fluids or potentially serious infectious diseases. All faculty, staff, and students will utilize **Standard Precautions** during all activities that present a risk of exposure to bodily fluids, potentially serious infectious diseases, or chemical hazards. Failure to do so will be grounds for disciplinary action.

Procedures

I. Standard Precautions

Definition: Standard precautions are the minimum safety and infection prevention practices that apply to **all** patient care, laboratory, or technical skills training experiences in any setting where healthcare or healthcare training is delivered. These practices are designed to protect healthcare professionals (HCP) and prevent HCP from spreading infections to others. Students will be instructed in Standard Precautions in the Clinical Methods and Procedures I course and again in clinical preparation meetings.

Standard Precautions include:

- **Hand hygiene.** Good hand hygiene is critical to reduce the risk of spreading infection. Current CDC guidelines recommend using alcohol-based hand rub for hand hygiene, except when hands are visibly soiled (e.g., dirt, blood, body fluids) or after caring for patients with known or suspected infectious diarrhea, in which case soap and water should be used. Key situations where hand hygiene should be performed include:
 - Before touching a patient, even if gloves will be worn.
 - Before exiting the patient's care area after touching the patient or the patient's immediate environment.
 - After contact with blood, body fluids or excretions, or wound dressings.
 - Prior to performing an aseptic task (e.g. placing an IV, preparing an injection).
 - If hands will be moving from a contaminated body site to a clean body site during patient care.
 - After glove removal.
- **Use of personal protective equipment (PPE):**
 - *Exam gloves* will be worn when there is risk of contact with or when handling blood or body fluids or when there is a potential for contact with mucous membranes, non-intact skin or body orifice areas, or contaminated equipment.
 - *Facial masks, protective eyewear and/or gowns (as well as gloves)* will be worn when performing/assisting procedures with a risk of body fluid or other hazardous material splashes or sprays.
- **Safe injection practices:**
 - No recapping of needles unless required by the specific procedure being performed.
 - Use self-sheathing needles and/or needleless systems when available.
 - All needles and other disposable sharps will be placed in designated puncture resistant containers as soon as possible after their use.
- **Safe handling of potentially contaminated surfaces or equipment:**
 - Environmental cleaning: Areas in which patient care activities are performed will be routinely cleaned and disinfected at the conclusion of the activity as outlined by the laboratory course director/instructor.
 - Medical equipment safety. Reusable medical equipment must be cleaned and disinfected (or sterilized) according to the manufacturer's instructions. If the manufacturer does not provide guidelines for this process, the device may not be suitable for multi-patient use.
- **Respiratory hygiene/Cough etiquette:**
 - Cover mouth/nose when coughing or sneezing.
 - Use and dispose of tissues.

- Perform hand hygiene after hands have been in contact with respiratory secretions.
- Consider using a mask to prevent aerosol spread. Consult with your clinical preceptor regarding specific clinical policy on when masks must be used.
- Sit as far away from others as possible when ill with respiratory symptoms.

Compliance with all safety practices is not just good procedure - it is a mark of professionalism. Persistent **failure to observe and practice Standard Precautions may result in adverse/disciplinary action for unprofessional behavior and referral to the Student Progress Committee.**

II. Safety Training

Students will be required to complete any clinical site-specific safety or security training requirements in preparation for supervised clinical practice rotations.

III. Post-exposure protocols

Should an exposure to blood and/or other body fluid via a needle stick injury or other mechanism occur, the procedure for obtaining appropriate medical care is as follows:

- 1) **When an exposure occurs:** Wounds and skin sites that have been in contact with blood or body fluids should be washed with soap and water; mucous membranes should be flushed with water. There is no evidence that the use of antiseptics for wound care or expressing fluid by squeezing the wound further reduces the risk for HIV transmission. However, the use of antiseptics is not contraindicated. Use of caustic agents, e.g., bleach, is not recommended.
- 2) The student should **notify his/her supervisor immediately**. The supervisor and student should fill out any "Notice of Incident" form in use by the clinical site as well as the form in use by the MPAS program. This form should go with the student to his/her evaluation for treatment.
- 3) **Medical Evaluation:** It is very important that a medical evaluation takes place immediately because treatment decisions should be made within 2 hours of exposure. HIV prophylaxis for high-risk exposure appears most effective if started within 2–4 hours. It is also extremely important to evaluate the donor's risk status immediately.
- 4) **Medical Evaluation Facilities:** The involved students (both the student who was exposed and the student from whom the exposure occurred) should report IMMEDIATELY to Student Health Service if exposure occurs on the High Point University Campus during regular working hours. If the exposure occurs at an off-campus clinical site, the student should follow the Infection Control policy of that facility. When the Student Health Service is closed, the students should go IMMEDIATELY to the nearest emergency room associated with the clinic or office where the incident occurred for the initial evaluation. Follow-up can be managed by Student Health.
- 5) **Program Participation:** Continued participation in the activities of the PA program will not be affected by any injury or illness that occurs while enrolled *provided* the student continues to meet all Technical Standards and fulfill all defined requirements for program progression and is not directly infectious by way of routine contact.
- 6) **Insurance:** The student's insurance identification card should be shown when a medical evaluation is needed. Students will be financially responsible for all costs incurred during compliance with this policy. (See Student Health Policy).

Policy on Personal Security

Personal safety is a primary concern of High Point University. Campus safety and security are enhanced by a professional security force and supplemented by officers with the High Point Police Department on a well-lit campus. Technological enhancements include Campus Assistance Response to Emergency (C.A.R.E.) points (blue security towers), an extensive video system, and a robust access control system.

Procedures

○ **Contacting Security:**

If you require emergency assistance:

- Dial extension 9111 from a campus extension.
- Call (336) 841-9111.
- Push the emergency call button on any C.A.R.E. point.
- Our non-emergency phone number is (336) 841-9112 or campus ext. 9112.
- The Security Department can be reached at either location: the main office (located in the North College Administration building at 1911 N. Centennial St) or the Security Service Center (located in the main lobby of the Wanek Center).

○ **Contacting Transportation:**

If you require immediate assistance:

- Dial extension 9113 from a campus extension.
 - Call (336) 841-9113 for routine assistance.
- **C.A.R.E. Points:** C.A.R.E. points are located throughout campus and may be used for Security assistance. Students should become familiar with their locations across campus.
- **Crimestoppers:** The Security Department maintains a Crimestoppers site for anonymously reporting suspicious activity on campus. To offer suggestions or comments, visit our Crimestoppers website or call (336) 841-4646. For crimes or suspicious activity in progress, please call Security Communications at (336) 841-9111.
- **Security Officers:** High Point University has well-vetted and trained officers and dispatchers to maintain the safety and security of persons and property. Dispatchers receive calls for service and coordinate responses. Officers evaluate situations, provide assistance, and investigate incidents.
- **Congdon:** The personal safety and security of all Physician Assistant students, faculty and staff are very important. Please observe the following policies regarding activities in the Department of Physician Assistant Studies:
- Routine hours of the Department of Physician Assistant Studies are 8:00am to 5:00pm Monday through Friday. Some departmental areas will not be accessible outside of these hours. Students must have permission from MPAS program faculty to access the limited areas at any other time.
 - Certain doors to the building will be locked at all times. **Do not prop doors open for anyone!**
 - When leaving any area, turn off the lights as well as any appliances, computers, or other audiovisual equipment that have been used.
 - Following use, restore the area to its original order, ready for routine business use the next day, including proper disposal of trash.
 - **Failure to follow these rules may result in referral to the Student Progress Committee for disciplinary action and may also result in revocation of after-hours access privileges to the department area.**

Student safety during SCPEs

HPU MPAS Program will ensure that appropriate OSHA training is provided to students prior to SCPEs. The facility at which the SCPE takes place shall provide to HPU PA students access to the facility's rules, regulations, policies and procedures with which the HPU PA students are expected to comply, including, the Facility's OSHA, personal and workplace security and personal safety policies and procedures and shall address all appropriate safety measures for all HPU PA students and any HPU MPAS instructors on site. It will be the preceptor's responsibility to take reasonable steps to ensure students' personal safety and security during the SCPE. This is clearly communicated to preceptors and verified during initial and ongoing site visits when reviewing the Practice Profile.

Approved by: Principal Faculty

Modified: February 2014; February 2015; March 2016; April 2017; April 2018; April 2019; April 2020; April 2021, April 2022 (Removal of duplicate internal policy); April 2023; March 2024 (updated form name for student safety during SCPEs), April 2026 (Updated ARC-PA standards)

Next Review: Spring 2027