

UGME Policy on Exposure to Infectious or Environmental Hazards

Background:

Dalhousie University is committed to the provision of a safe and healthy work and learning environment and has numerous health and safety policies that support the Dalhousie Environmental Health and Safety Policy. Undergraduate medical education is provided not only on Dalhousie campuses, but also within affiliated health care centres in an environment where clinical education is integrated with clinical service. All of Dalhousie's affiliated health care centres have environmental health and safety policies that regulate the activities of those operating within such facilities.

Participation in the undergraduate medical education program carries with it the risk that a medical student may be exposed to an infectious or environmental hazard. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that appropriate processes are in place to ensure that medical students know which policies to follow in the event of such an exposure, and are directed to appropriate treatment and follow-up.

Definitions:

"exposure incident" means an injury or exposure to an infectious or environmental hazard.

Policy:

1. Medical students who experience an exposure incident in a Dalhousie University facility shall follow the reporting and follow-up requirements of the relevant Dalhousie University environmental health and safety policies then in effect.
2. Medical students who experience an exposure incident in an affiliated health care facility shall follow the reporting and follow-up requirements of the affiliated health care centre's relevant environmental health and safety policies then in effect.
3. In addition to the reporting requirements set out in sections 1 and 2, medical students who experience an exposure incident shall report the incident to the Unit Head or Clerkship Director of the unit or rotation in which the student was participating at the time of the exposure incident. Unit Heads and Clerkship Directors shall forward reports of exposure incidents to the Assistant Dean Student Affairs.

4. Financial costs associated with treatment of exposure incidents shall be the responsibility of the medical student. Medical students are required to participate in the medical plan provided through the Dalhousie Student Union or in a comparable plan that provides comparable coverage for treatment arising from such incidents.
5. Medical students are expected to attend sessions providing instruction on environmental health and safety policies, rules and procedures affecting their educational and research activities in all facilities to which they are assigned, and on infection prevention and control measures.
6. Reports of exposure incidents shall be held in strict confidence, to be used by the Assistant Dean, Student Affairs, only as necessary to follow up with the student experiencing the exposure incident to ensure that treatment and follow-up measures are being undertaken and to assist the student in addressing any accommodation or adjustment to their participation in the academic program that may be required as a result of any injuries sustained. Please refer to Policy For Undergraduate Students With A Communicable Infection <http://undergraduate.medicine.dal.ca/policies.htm>