

<b>Policy: PA Student Exposure to Infectious and Environmental Hazards Policy</b>	<b>Date Last Reviewed:</b> May 11, 2023
<b>Source:</b> ARC-PA Accreditation Standards for Physician Assistant Education, 5 <sup>th</sup> Edition	<b>Authorized by:</b> Program Director
<b>Date Initiated:</b> January 2023	<b>Date Last Revised:</b> May 11, 2023
<b>Standards Addressed:</b> A3.08 a), b), c)	<b>Next Review:</b> May 2024

**Purpose of Policy:**

This policy is written to clearly define the procedures demonstrating compliance with the ARC-PA standards related to addressing Trevecca Nazarene University's PA Program student exposure to infectious and environmental hazards before students undertake any education activities that may place them at risk.

All planning for and implementation of this policy is directed by the PA program's standards for accreditation and university policies and procedures to ensure compliance.

**ARC-PA Standard(s):**

- A3.08 The program *must* define, publish, make *readily available* and consistently apply policies addressing student exposure to infectious and environmental hazards before students undertake any educational activities which would place them at risk. Those policies *must*:
  - a) Address methods of prevention,
  - b) Address procedures for care and treatment after exposure, and
  - c) Clearly define financial responsibility

**Policy & Procedures:****Overview:**

The Trevecca PA Program recognizes that as students engage in certain required educational activities as part of the program (such as lab activities and patient care experiences), there are inherent risks of accidents, injuries, and/or exposure to infectious and environmental hazards. Such exposures may include but are not limited to needle sticks, splashing of blood/bodily fluids into the eyes, or contact of blood/bodily fluids with an open wound on the student's body. These risks cannot be completely eliminated while still providing quality medical education.

The Trevecca PA program provides education and training about student exposure to infectious and environmental hazards, including methods of prevention, procedures for care and treatment after exposure, reporting of incidents, and clearly defined financial responsibility. This education/training occurs before students undertake any educational activities which would place them at risk. The program's training includes, but is not limited to, universal precautions, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) standards, recommendations, and regulations. Current guidelines will be used as a basis for this information.

**Student Training and Prevention:**

Initial training for PA students will occur prior to undertaking any educational activities of the program's didactic phase which would place students at risk. Further education is assigned prior to beginning clinical rotations. All PA students are required to complete assigned training modules by the assigned deadlines.

Students will also be required to sign a University *Assumption of Risk, Release, and Waiver of Liability Agreement*.

Initial training module assignments for PA students will be completed prior to the start of the first didactic semester. Students will provide signed documentation to the Academic Coordinator verifying completion and understanding of assigned training modules.

The second training module assignments for PA students will be completed prior to entering clinical rotations of the clinical phase of the program. Students will provide signed documentation to the Clinical Coordinator verifying completion and understanding of assigned training modules. Students may also be assigned additional clinical site-specific training to complete prior to individual clinical rotations as part of site onboarding for students.

If a student fails to complete an assigned training module by the deadline for completion, the student will be required to meet with the Promotions, Retention and Disciplinary Committee to determine a corrective course of action. Students who fail to complete assigned training modules by the required deadlines will not be permitted to attend educational activities that may place the student at risk (such as Anatomy Dissection Lab, Surgery Lab, Medical Diagnostics and Procedures Lab, and clinical rotations) until all training module deficiencies are resolved. Any absences incurred because of violation(s) of this policy will count towards a student's unexcused absences in accordance with the Attendance Policy.

#### **Procedures for Care and Treatment After Injury, Accident, or Exposure:**

**Incident On-Campus:** In the event an injury, accident, or exposure to an infectious or environmental hazard (such as a needle stick or blood/bodily fluid exposure) occurs when a student is on Trevecca's campus, students must alert their respective program instructor immediately. Students should go to the Trevecca Student Health Clinic for evaluation to determine if treatment is necessary. The Trevecca Student Health Clinic will provide initial screening, evaluation, testing, and initiation of necessary prophylaxis, follow-up, and referral (when indicated) for students who have had an injury, accident, or exposure to an infectious or environmental hazard (such as blood or bodily fluids). If the incident occurs after hours when the Student Health Clinic is closed, students should report to a local Emergency Treatment Center or Urgent Care Center for advice and/or treatment.

**Incident Off-Campus (including clinical rotations):** In the event an injury, accident or exposure to an infectious or environmental hazard (such as a needle stick or blood/bodily fluid exposure) occurs when a student is not on Trevecca's campus, such as during a clinical rotation, students are to alert their preceptor (for clinical rotations) or respective program instructor immediately. For clinical rotations, students are to follow the guidelines of the medical facility where the accident or exposure occurs. The guidelines of the medical facility cover the provision of care related to infectious or environmental hazard exposures, and when indicated, students may be advised by the facility to undergo initial screening, evaluation, testing, and initiation of necessary prophylaxis, follow-up, and referral. If no treatment is available at the clinical site/medical facility, the student should report to a local Emergency Treatment Center or Urgent Care Center for advice and/or treatment.

**Student Reporting of Incident to Program:**

Injuries, accidents, and environmental/infectious exposures of all kinds that occur while undertaking any educational activity must be reported to the program promptly. The program's Accident/Incident Report Form must be completed and submitted to the appropriate personnel (see following), based upon which phase of the program the student is in (didactic or clinical), *within 24 hours* of the accident's/incident's occurrence.

For didactic students, the Accident/Incident Report should be submitted via email to the Program Director, Academic Director, and Academic Coordinator. For clinical students, the Accident/Incident Report should be submitted via email to the Program Director, Clinical Director, and Clinical Coordinator. The program Accident/Injury Report Form is made available via both the Didactic and Clinical Handbooks and is also available to students on Blackboard.

**Financial Responsibility:**

Each student is required to have their own health insurance throughout the duration of the PA program. Any costs associated with student medical care and treatments will be filed with the individual student's insurance and are the student's responsibility and not that of the PA Program, the University, or clinical sites. Trevecca Nazarene University does not assume liability for injury, accident, or exposure to an infectious or environmental hazard (such as blood or bodily fluids) that may occur while a student is engaged in an experience related to their education.

**Publishing of Policy & Procedures:**

All active Student Handbooks will include this policy. A hyperlink for this program policy will be provided on the program's website to ensure the policy is published and readily accessible for prospective students as well as enrolled students. The procedures for care and treatment after exposure will also be posted in the program lab spaces for reference.