COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT FOR SAFE HANDLING OF HAZARDOUS DRUGS

1. GENERAL INFORMATION
   A. Review of guidelines for the safe handling of hazardous drugs.
   B. Recommendations from Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).
   C. Safety procedures for personnel, based on their specific roles related to hazardous drug handling.

2. REVIEW OF RISKS OF OCCUPATIONAL EXPOSURE
   A. The greatest risk of occupational exposure to hazardous drugs occurs during the manufacturing and preparation processes.
   B. A lower risk of occupational exposure occurs when handling patient excreta, where drugs or their metabolites are present in lower concentration.
      1) Chronic low-level exposure to hazardous drugs can lead to absorption.
      2) Acute exposure to hazardous drugs may lead to acute symptoms.
      3) The use of PPE reduces the absorption of hazardous drugs and the incidence of adverse health effects.
   C. Review of potential points of exposure including absorption of drugs through contact with the skin, mucous membranes, or eyes and through drug ingestion as a result of contact with food, beverages, chewing gum, food containers and utensils, or tobacco products.
   D. Examples of areas at risk for touch contamination.
      1) On the outside of a receptacle or puncture-proof container where cytotoxic waste is stored.
      2) On the outside of a urinary catheter drainage bag of a patient receiving chemotherapy therapy.
      3) On a cart used to transport hazardous drugs from the pharmacy preparation area to the place of administration.
      4) On the over bed or chair side table where chemotherapy is placed during administration.
3. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

A. Gloves
   1) Good quality gloves made of nitrile, polyurethane, neoprene, or other materials that have been tested with hazardous drugs
   2) Select powder-free/latex-free gloves
   3) Inspect gloves for visible defects
   4) Change gloves if damaged or contaminated

B. Gowns
   1) Disposable
   2) Lint-free, low/non permeable fabric
   3) Closed front (back closure), long sleeves, and elastic or knit closed cuffs

C. Eye and Face Protection
   1) Whenever splashes, sprays, or aerosols of hazardous drugs may be generated and potentially result in eye, nose, or mouth contamination, chemical-barrier face and eye protection must be provided and used in accordance with OSHA standards.
   2) Eyeglasses with side shields are inadequate protection.

4. PROPER DISPOSAL OF HAZARDOUS DRUGS -POST ADMINISTRATION

A. Implement safe handling precautions during chemo administration and for 48 hours after completion of therapy when handling body fluids or linens.

B. Wear a face shield whenever splashing is possible, for example when flushing a toilet without a lid.

C. Healthcare workers handling laundry items contaminated with urine, stool, and other excreta should wear disposable gowns and gloves(Nitrile gloves and Fluid Impermeable gowns)

D. Discard gowns if not soiled in biohazardous waste(red-bag) container provided by Environmental Services.

E. Discard of all IV tubing, bags, bottles, soiled gowns and gloves in the Hazardous Waste Barrel provided by the Safety Department.

F. IV syringes that are considered “empty”... or residually contaminated” with Cytotoxic drugs can be placed in a regular sharps container. The sharps container must be placed in the Yellow-BioHazardous Waste Box (provided by Environmental Services) for incineration for all units/areas that handle Cytotoxic drugs. (This will allow Standards to be meet under the EPA/ or State law for Hazardous Waste Management Guidelines.)
5. PROCEDURE FOR CLEAN UP OF HAZARDOUS DRUGS

   A. Assess for and isolate any individual involved in the spill of a hazardous drug.

   B. If the individual’s clothing or skin has made contact with the hazardous agent:
      **Immediately wash the area with soap and water. Use Eye System wash if needed.**

   C. Get **HELP!** Know where the **spill kits are located on the unit.**

   D. **Place all items used in the spill kit in the Yellow Bio-Hazardous Box.**

   F. Call the **SAFETY OFFICE** to replace the used spill kit.

Reference
Oncology Nursing Society, Safe Handling of Hazardous Drugs, 2003
LSUHSC- Safety Department, 2007