



## Risk Categorisation

### *Risk of Occupational Exposure to the Specified Infectious Diseases*

ACT Health categorises all health care workers (HCWs) according to their risk of occupational exposure to the specified infectious diseases. Work activities, rather than job title, are considered on an individual basis when risk category determinations are made. There are two categories of risk – **Category A** and **Category B** – which reflect the likelihood of exposure to infectious people and/or substances:

- Category A:** HCWs who have contact with patients and/or blood, body substances or infectious materials.  
**Category B:** HCWs who have no contact with patients or blood, body substances or infectious materials.

Category A	
<p><b>Contact with patients and/or blood, body substances or infectious materials.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Direct or indirect contact with, or potential exposure to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Patients. <b>OR</b></li> <li>- Deceased persons or body parts. <b>OR</b></li> <li>- Blood, body substances, infectious material. <b>OR</b></li> <li>- Surfaces or equipment that might contain blood, body substances, infectious material, for example, soiled linen, surgical equipment, syringes.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Other contact that would allow the acquisition or transmission of diseases that are spread by respiratory means. This includes HCWs:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Whose work requires frequent or prolonged face-to-face contact with patients or clients (e.g. HCWs interviewing or counselling individual clients or small groups, HCWs performing reception duties in an emergency/outpatients department). <b>OR</b></li> <li>- Whose normal work location is in a clinical area such as a ward, emergency department, outpatient clinic (e.g. ward clerks and patient transport officers). <b>OR</b></li> <li>- Who, throughout their working week, are frequently required to attend clinical areas (e.g. food services HCWs who deliver meals).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>Examples include, but are not limited to: dentists; doctors; contracted domestic and environmental staff, nurses; mortuary technicians; laboratory scientists; allied health practitioners; tertiary students; personal care assistants; clerical personnel on wards; maintenance engineers who service equipment; sterilising service personnel; personnel responsible for the decontamination and disposal of contaminated materials; laundry personnel; waste facility personnel (e.g. Mitchell Sterilising Services).</i></p>
Category B	
<p><b>No contact with patients or blood, body substances or infectious materials.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Do NOT have <b>contact</b> with, or potential exposure to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Patients. <b>OR</b></li> <li>- Deceased persons or body parts. <b>OR</b></li> <li>- Blood, body substances, infectious material. <b>OR</b></li> <li>- Surfaces or equipment that might contain blood, body substances, infectious material, for example, soiled linen, surgical equipment, syringes.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Do NOT have other contact that would allow the acquisition or transmission of diseases that are spread by respiratory means.</li> </ul> <p><i>Examples include, but are not limited to: administration and clerical personnel in non-clinical work settings; some secondary students; stores personnel, kitchen personnel.</i></p>

Category A HCWs are sub-categorised as either A1, A2 or A3.

**Category A1:** HCWs who care for or have contact with patients and/or blood, body substances or infectious materials by **performing exposure prone procedures**.

**Category A2:** HCWs who care for, or have contact with, **high risk client groups** or **high risk clinical areas**, **laboratory personnel** and other HCWs whose main work duties **expose them** to blood, body substances or potentially infectious material. The reference to high risk client groups and high risk clinical areas means the client groups and clinical areas specified in **Table A**.

**Category A3:** HCWs who care for, or have contact with, client groups or clinical areas (but not from high risk client groups or clinical areas) and/or whose main work duties **may expose them** to blood, body substances or infectious materials.

**Table A**

*High risk client groups and high risk clinical areas*

High risk client groups	High risk clinical areas
Children less than 2 years of age, including neonates and premature infants. Pregnant women. Immunocompromised clients.	Ante-natal, peri-natal and post-natal areas including labour wards and recovery rooms. Neonatal Intensive Care Units and Special Care Units. Paediatric wards. Transplant and oncology wards. Intensive Care Units. Emergency Departments. Operating theatres and recovery rooms treating high risk client groups. Ambulance service. Laboratories.

**Tertiary students** are Category A whereas secondary school students may be Category A or Category B.

**Secondary students** undertaking a clinical placement that involves contact with a high risk client group or high risk clinical area are Category A. Secondary students undertaking a clinical placement that does not involve contact with a high risk client group or high risk clinical area are Category B.

There are different occupational assessment, screening and vaccination requirements depending on the category of risk:

**Category A:** Documentation of immunisation and/or immune status is **mandatory**; whereas

**Category B:** Documentation of immunisation and/or immune status is **not required** - Category B HCWs have no greater risk of exposure than the general community.

Vaccines must be administered in accordance with the recommendations in the current *Australian Immunisation Handbook*, with particular reference to the indications and contraindications, by a medical practitioner, registered nurse under medical direction, or a registered nurse authorised to immunise under the legislative framework of the *ACT Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act (2008)*.

### **Adverse Event Following Immunisation (AEFI)**

HCWs must report an adverse event following a vaccination to their vaccination provider, who will notify the Adverse Event Following Immunisation (AEFI) to the Communicable Disease Control Section of the Health Protection Service. HCWs who experience an AEFI should report the AEFI to the vaccination provider as soon as possible.