

# Security Spotlight

*An informational Guide for Securitas Canada Clients and Employees*

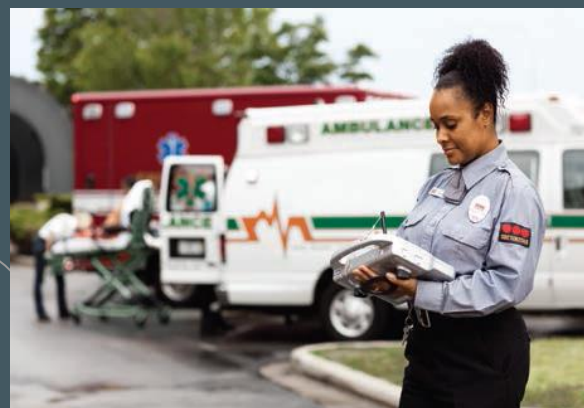


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## Ebola: What You Need to Know



**The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared that the Ebola outbreak in West Africa has reached the proportions of an international health emergency and although Canada has yet to have a confirmed case the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has confirmed three cases of Ebola diagnosed in the U.S.**

Two of those individuals contracted the disease from a patient who was infected outside of the U.S. The third individual contracted it while treating patients outside the U.S. While it is believed that Ebola will not be a major health issue, you need to be educated and understand how Ebola is transmitted, its symptoms, and how to protect yourself against the possibility of exposure.

### **Transmission of Ebola**

Ebola is not transmitted through the air, water, or food. An infected person's blood or body fluids must make direct contact with your skin or mucus membranes for the disease to infect you. The virus can enter your body through a break in your skin (cut, scrape, scratch, etc.). The virus can also

enter through contact with your mucus membranes (the eyes or the interior of the nose, mouth, etc.).

Ebola is not carried by insects. It can only live in mammals (humans, bats, monkeys, pigs, dogs, etc.). It is still unknown as to how long the virus can live on contaminated surfaces. Viruses similar to Ebola can survive for two or more weeks on contaminated fabrics and surfaces. For more detailed information refer to the Government of Canada website <http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/diseases-conditions-maladies-affections/disease-maladie/ebola/index-eng.php>.

### **Symptoms of Ebola**

Ebola symptoms include: Fever (greater than 38.6°C or 101.5°F); Severe headache; Abdominal (stomach) pain; Diarrhea; Vomiting; Muscle pain; Weakness; Unexplained hemorrhage (bleeding or bruising)

Symptoms may appear anywhere from 2 to 21 days after exposure to Ebola, but the average is 8 to 10 days. Other diseases have similar symptoms so please seek immediate medical care if you develop any of the symptoms above,

especially if you know or have been informed that you may have come in contact with someone who is being tested or has been diagnosed with Ebola. Security personnel assigned to health care and transportation industries should be especially vigilant in monitoring their health condition.

### **Protection against Ebola in the Workplace**

It is highly unlikely that you will come into contact with an individual who has been exposed to Ebola. However, follow these general steps to defend yourself against any ill person.

1. If you encounter an ill person, follow your Post Orders and, as permitted, offer to call for medical assistance. Make it clear to the person that you want to get them medical assistance for their own wellbeing. Notify your supervisor immediately. Report the incident as per your Post Orders and include as much information about the person as possible (name, address, description, physical condition).
2. Maintain at least an arm's length distance from the person, but remain polite and as helpful as possible.
3. Avoid contact with any of the person's bodily fluids (cough or sneeze droplets, sweat, blood, vomit, etc.).
4. Follow your Post Orders if you come in contact with any of the person's body fluids. In order to maximize your protection, you should immediately clean the affected skin areas with an alcohol-based sanitizer or scrub with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds.
5. Until they are disinfected, avoid contact with items that may have come in contact with an infected person's body fluids. This could include public use items, such as handrails, doorknobs, elevator buttons, faucet handles, etc.
6. Contamination of surfaces or objects must be contained and sanitized as quickly as it is possible to do so in a safe manner. Block off the area in need of disinfecting to protect others from entering. Contact the maintenance department or hazard abatement professionals, as per your Post Orders.

7. Use common sense and do not put yourself or others at risk by not exercising caution in dealing with ill persons.
8. Equipment and training will vary from site to site. If your job puts you at risk of exposure to any pathogens, you will receive additional training based on your site's Exposure Control Plan. Make use of whatever PPE is available to you if you must deal with an infectious person, but be sure to know the proper use of the PPE and its protective limitations.

### **Ebola Can Be Stopped**

Ebola is a threat that must be taken seriously. Fortunately, our country is on the alert and steps are being taken to prevent any further occurrences of the disease in the Canada. With vigilance the spread of Ebola can be prevented. Review your Post Orders and client policies. Check out the educational references cited in this article to enhance your ability to understand and use safe work practices, and increase your knowledge of infectious disease safety procedures. Such training will better enable you to keep the client's site safer and more secure.

#### **Check out these websites for more information:**

Government of Canada website <http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/diseases-conditions-maladies-affections/disease-maladie/ebola/index-eng.php> provides information on symptoms, risks, treatment, prevention, surveillance, information for health professionals and what Canada's Public Health Response is to Ebola.

The CDC site at <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/> provides more information about the disease and how to deal with it.

Further medical information about Ebola can be found at:

The World Health Organization (WHO) site at <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/en/>