

Update from the California Department of Public Health's Occupational Health Branch

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Chief, Occupational Health Branch

California Industrial Hygiene Council
December 7, 2015 – San Francisco

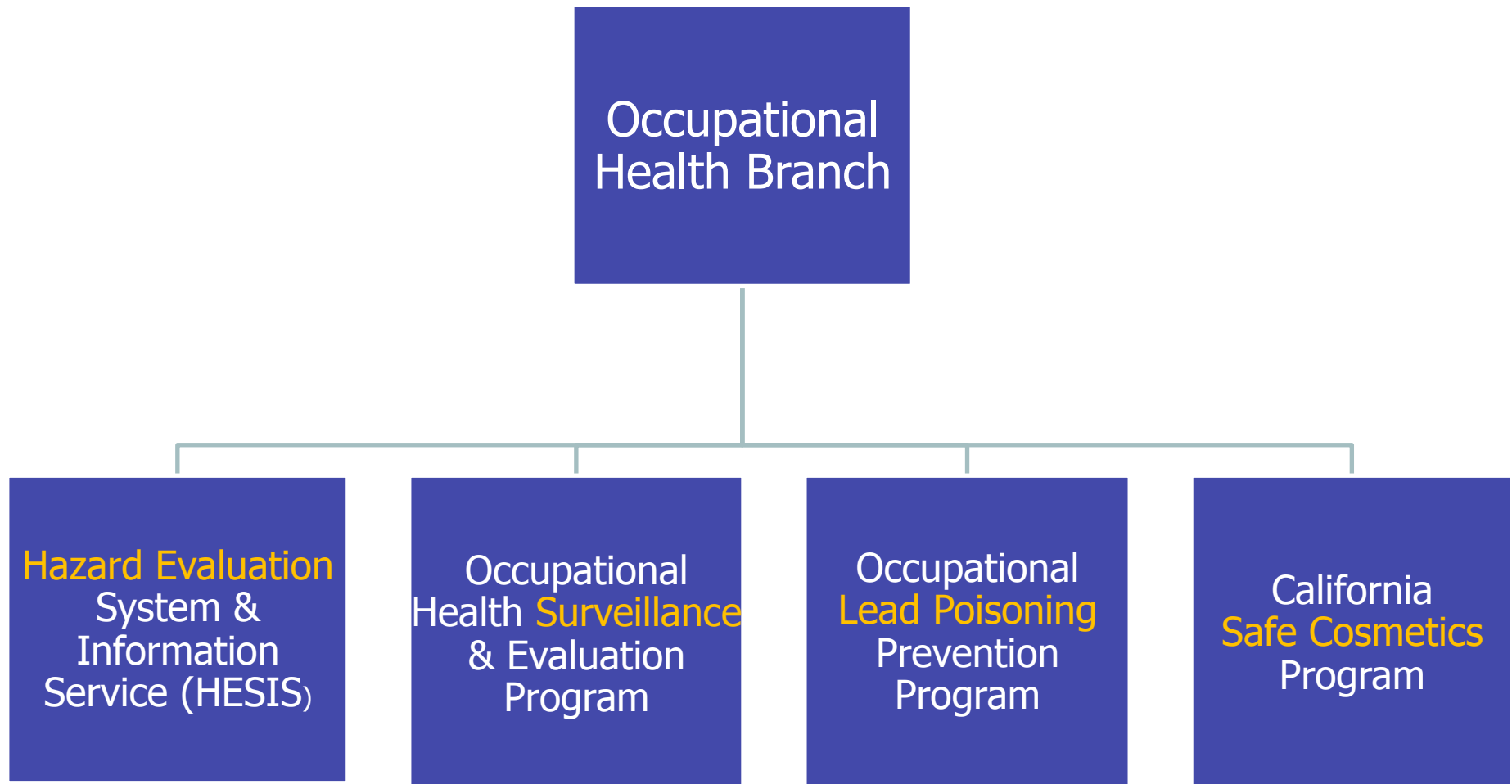


Overview

- Intro to the Occupational Health Branch
- Support for Cal/OSHA standards setting
 - Lead
 - Sexually transmitted infections
- Emerging issue: Avian influenza
- Highlights of 2015 projects
- How you can stay in touch & use our resources

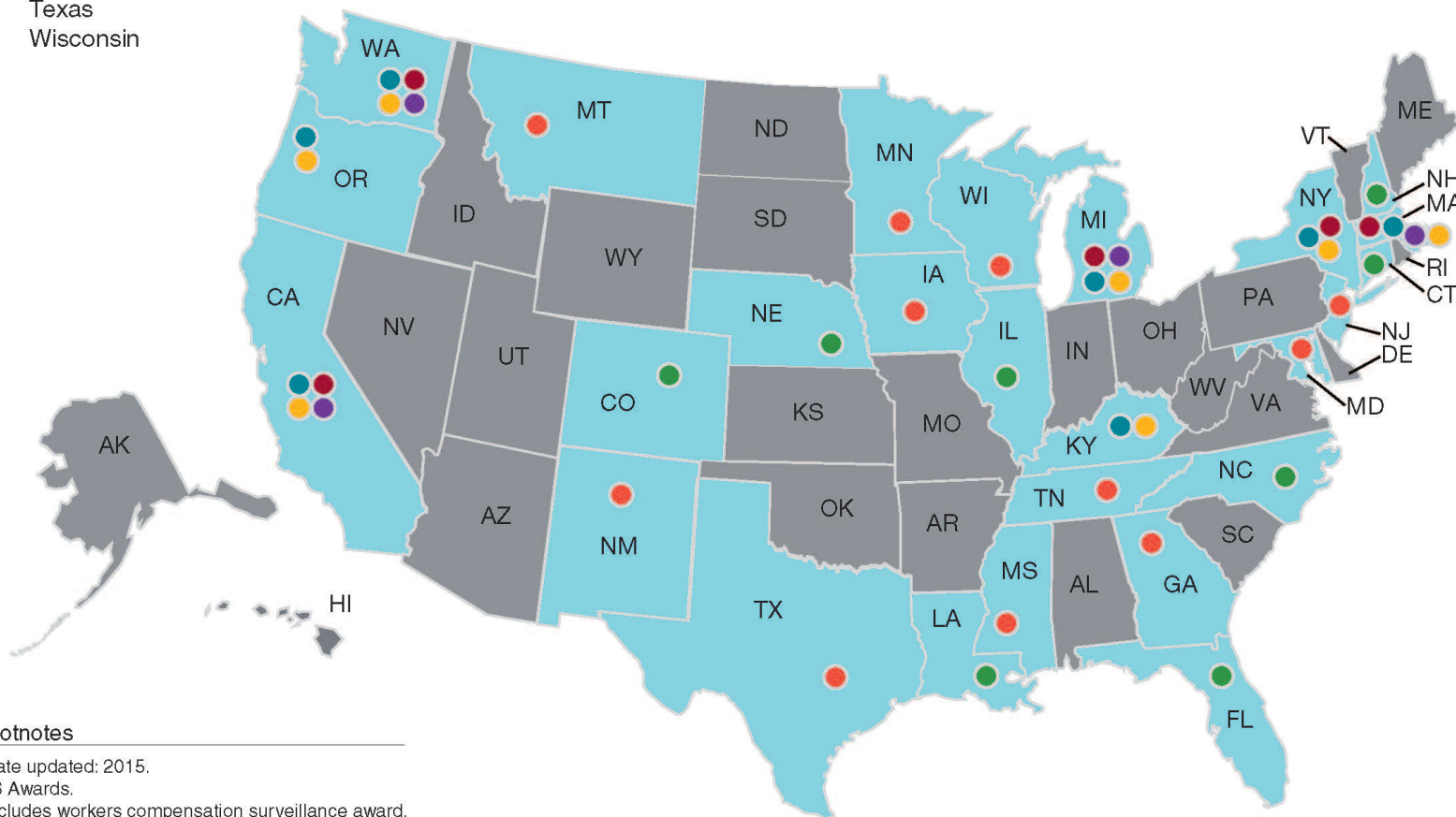


Promoting safe and health workplaces across California



NIOSH Sponsored State Occupational Health & Safety Surveillance Program*†

Fundamental Program	Fundamental-Plus Program	Expanded Program	Fatality Assessment & Control Evaluation	Respiratory Diseases Projects	Other and Pesticides Projects
Georgia Iowa Maryland Minnesota Mississippi Montana New Jersey New Mexico Tennessee Texas Wisconsin	Colorado Connecticut Florida Illinois Louisiana North Carolina Nebraska New Hampshire	California Kentucky Massachusetts Michigan New York Oregon Washington	California Kentucky Massachusetts Michigan New York Oregon Washington	California Massachusetts Michigan New York Washington	California‡ Massachusetts‡ Michigan Washington



Footnotes

*Date updated: 2015.

†26 Awards.

‡Includes workers compensation surveillance award.

Promoting safe & healthy workplaces



OHB support for Cal/OSHA standard setting:

Lead in general industry, 5198 &
construction, 1532.1

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/olppp/Pages/LeadStdRecs.aspx>

OLPPP's mandated activities

- Track blood lead levels (BLLs) in CA workers
- Provide information, training & technical assistance
- Investigate worker & take-home lead poisoning
- Make prevention recommendations

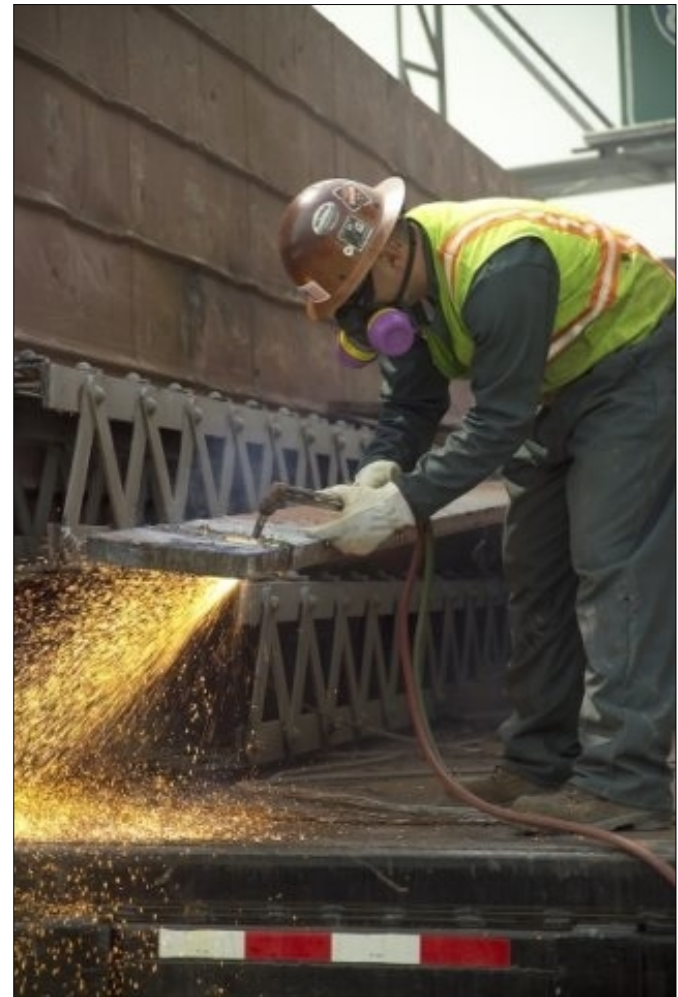


Phlebotomist draws blood sample for lead test

New attention on health effects of lead

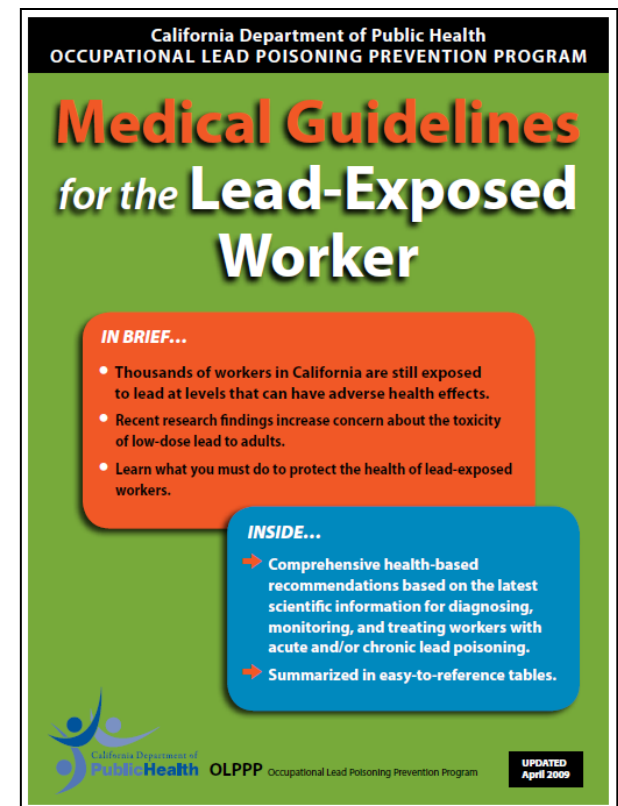
- Lead standards based on toxicity data from 1978
- Evidence* of effects at lower, chronic BLLs; goal: BLLs < 10 ug/dL
 - Hypertension
 - Kidney dysfunction
 - Cognitive dysfunction
 - Adverse reproductive effects

**Environ Health Perspectives
115(3), March 2007*



Building the case for better standards

- Reviewed data on low-level health effects
- Convened panel to revise medical management guidelines
- 2007 Environmental Health Perspectives article
- 2009 OLPPP guidelines for health professionals



Getting the word out

WORKPLACE HAZARD ALERT

New Health Dangers from Lead



Levels of lead once thought harmless now shown to be toxic

If you work with lead you need to:

- ➔ Find out how much lead is in your blood.
- ➔ Talk to your doctor about lead and your health.
- ➔ Take steps to protect yourself at work.

What health damage can low levels of lead cause?

Studies in recent years show that low levels of lead in adults can:

- ➔ **increase blood pressure**— may increase your chances of having a heart attack or stroke.
- ➔ **decrease brain function**— making it more difficult to think, learn, and remember.
- ➔ **decrease kidney function**— making it more difficult to get rid of toxic waste products through your urine.
- ➔ **harm the physical and mental development of your baby** before it's born.
- ➔ **increase chances of having a miscarriage.**

Health damage from lead:

- * Can be permanent.
- * Can be occurring even if you have no symptoms.
- * May not show up until many years later.

You may work with lead if you:

- Make or repair radiators
- Make or recycle batteries
- Recycle scrap metal or electronics
- Melt, cast, or grind lead, brass, or bronze
- Make or glaze ceramics
- Work at a shooting range
- Remove paint or coatings
- Remodel homes and buildings
- Tear down buildings, bridges, or tanks

This is not a complete list. If you are unsure if you work with lead, ask your employer.

California Department of Public Health
OLPPP
Occupational Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

WORKPLACE HAZARD ALERT

New Health Dangers from Lead



What Employers Should Know

Levels of lead once thought harmless now shown to be toxic

Recent studies show that low levels of lead in adults can:

- ➔ **increase blood pressure**—may increase the chances of having a heart attack or stroke.
- ➔ **decrease brain function**—making it more difficult to think, learn, and remember.
- ➔ **decrease kidney function**—making it more difficult to get rid of toxic waste products through the urine.
- ➔ **harm the physical and mental development of a baby** before it's born.
- ➔ **increase chances of having a miscarriage.**

If your business uses or disturbs lead, you need to:

- ➔ Provide your employees with a blood lead level test.
- ➔ Take steps to keep lead dust and fume levels down.

Health damage from lead:

- * Can be permanent.
- * Can be occurring even if workers have no symptoms.
- * May not show up until many years later.

Your business could be using or disturbing lead if you:

- Make or repair radiators
- Make or recycle batteries
- Recycle scrap metal or electronics
- Melt, cast, or grind lead, brass, or bronze
- Make or glaze ceramics
- Operate a shooting range
- Remove or disturb paint or coatings
- Remodel homes and buildings
- Tear down buildings, bridges, or tanks
- Cut, weld, or saw lead-containing metal
- Use solder

This is not a complete list. Check the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) or the chemical composition sheet for the products and materials you use.

California Department of Public Health
OLPPP
Occupational Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

Taking the next steps

2010/2011: Key recommendations to Cal/OSHA

- Workers removed at BLLs 20 - 30 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$
- Increased frequency of blood lead testing
- BLL testing based on presence of lead hazard, not air monitoring
- Lower PEL



Toward a new PEL

- November 2013 symposium
 - Chronic health effects
 - Modeling air/blood lead relationship
- CDPH health-based PEL recommendation
 - 0.5 – 2.1 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$
 - To keep 95% of workers' BLLs under 5 – 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$



Photo credit: Kevin Thompson

Cal/OSHA advisory committee meetings

- February 2011
- January 2012 – medical requirements
- June 2014
- April 2015 – general industry
- May 2015 -- construction
- November 2015



Key features of discussion drafts

- Medical Removal Protection level reduced:
 - 1 BLL \geq 30 or 2 BLLs \geq 20 ug/dL
- More frequent BLL testing
- BLL testing triggered by lead use/disturbance or trigger tasks OR exposure $>$ AL
- PEL of 10 ug/m³; AL of 2 ug/m³
- Hygiene measures at all exposure levels
- Special considerations for battery manufacturing & abrasive blasting

What now?

- Cal/OSHA submits “standards package” to Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board
- Board takes public comments and issues a revised standard



Which industries will be most affected by revised standards?



Industries with largest # workers tested, 2014 (draft numbers)

Industry	% >10 µg/dL	# Workers	# Employers
Storage battery manufacturing	42%	866	9
Remediation services	2%	838	113
Recyclable material	11%	570	22
Painting contractors	14%	502	51
Government, air & water	<1%	491	19
Secondary smelting	55%	424	8
Fire protection	0%	352	19
Wrecking and demolition	6%	325	39
Fossil fuel electrical power Generation	0%	227	4
Firing ranges	66%	169	42

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Firing ranges	66%	169	42

Industries with largest % workers >10 ug/dL, 2014

(draft numbers; industries testing 30+ workers)

Industry	% ≥10 µg/dL	# Workers	# Employers
Firing ranges	68	165	41
Sheet metal work manufacturing	68	37	5
Other aircraft parts manufacture	58	31	4
Secondary smelting	55	424	8
Storage battery manufacture	42	869	10
Industrial building construction	28	92	3
Other metal valve and pipefitting manufacture	22	37	1
Painting contractors	14	501	51
Commercial and institutional bldg. construction	12	161	31
Recyclable material	11	570	22

OHB support for Cal/OSHA standard setting:

Sexually transmitted infections, 5193.1
(adult film industry)

http://www.dir.ca.gov/OSHSB/Sexually_transmitted_infections.html

Lack of condom use poses risks

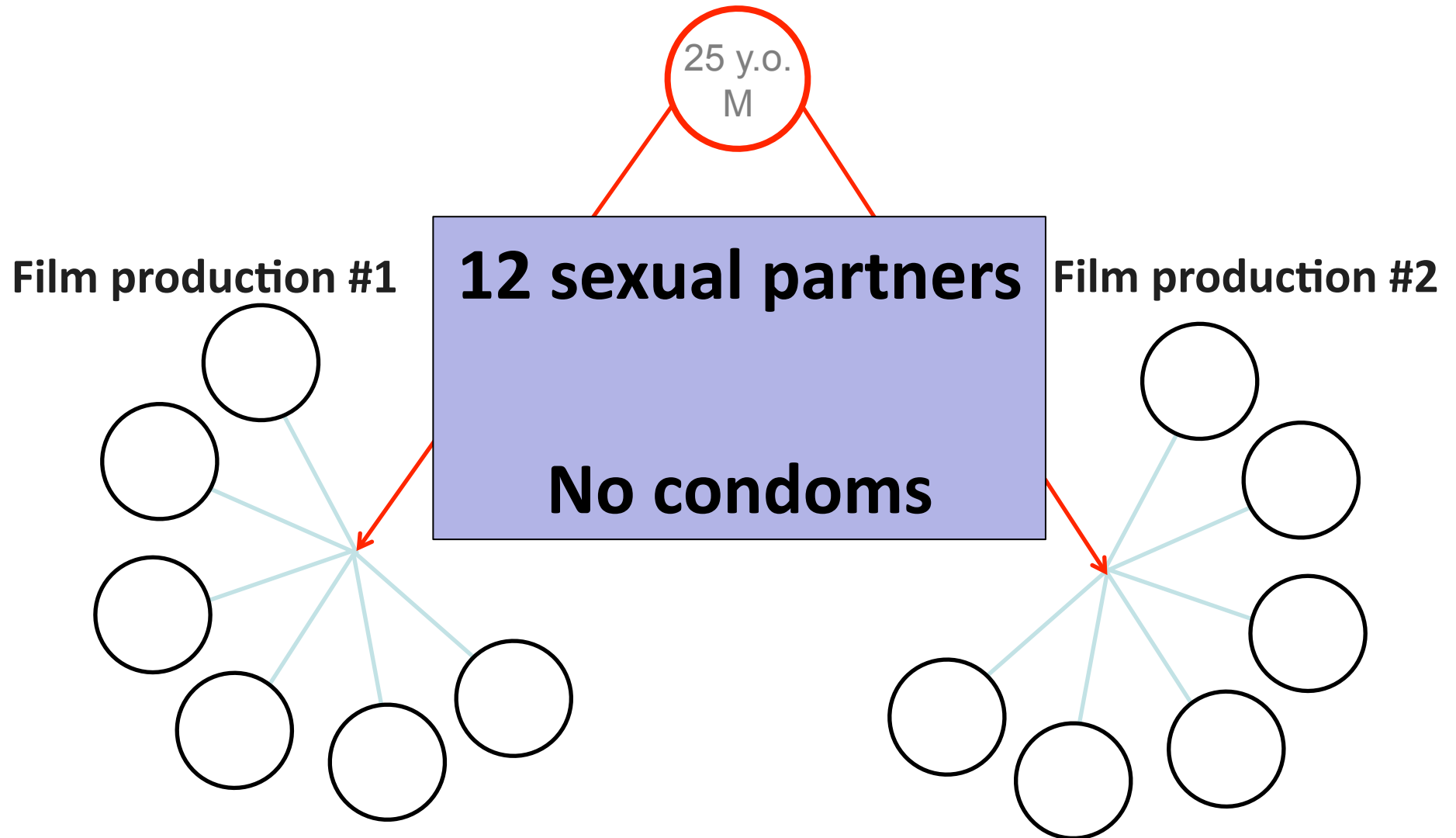


Condom use by random sample of 50 heterosexual and 50 male homosexual films (2005–2006):

Penile-vaginal	3%
Heterosexual penile-anal	42%
Homosexual penile-anal	80%

(Grudzen et al., AJPH, 2009, 99Suppl1:S152–6)

New HIV infection in a CA adult film performer who had recently tested negative



HIV testing in the adult film industry

The screenshot shows the PASS website header with the logo and navigation links: Home, About Us, Contact Us, Health & Safety Manual, and Testing Facilities. Below the header is a registration form titled "Everybody fills in this information". The form includes three input fields: "Name (exactly as appears on your government issued ID) *", "Email *", and "Telephone *". Below the form are two links: "Then click here if you are a Performer" and "Or click here if you are a Producer or Agent". A small asterisk note at the bottom left indicates "* = required".



Negative test within past 14 days?

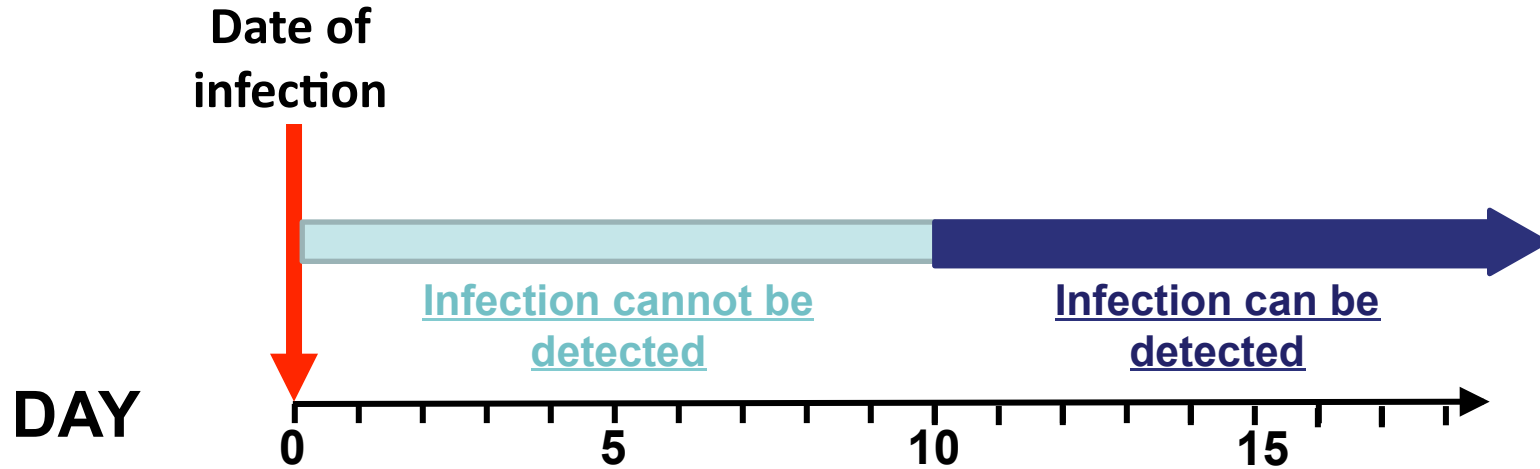
YES

NO

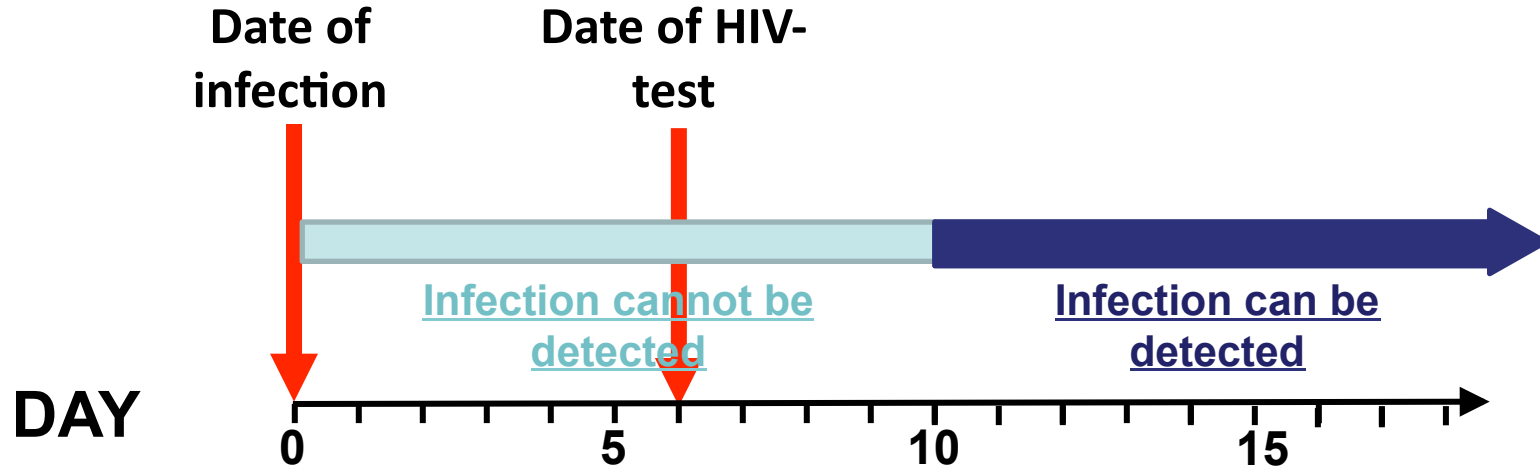
Green ✓: Cleared for work.

Red X: NOT cleared for work.

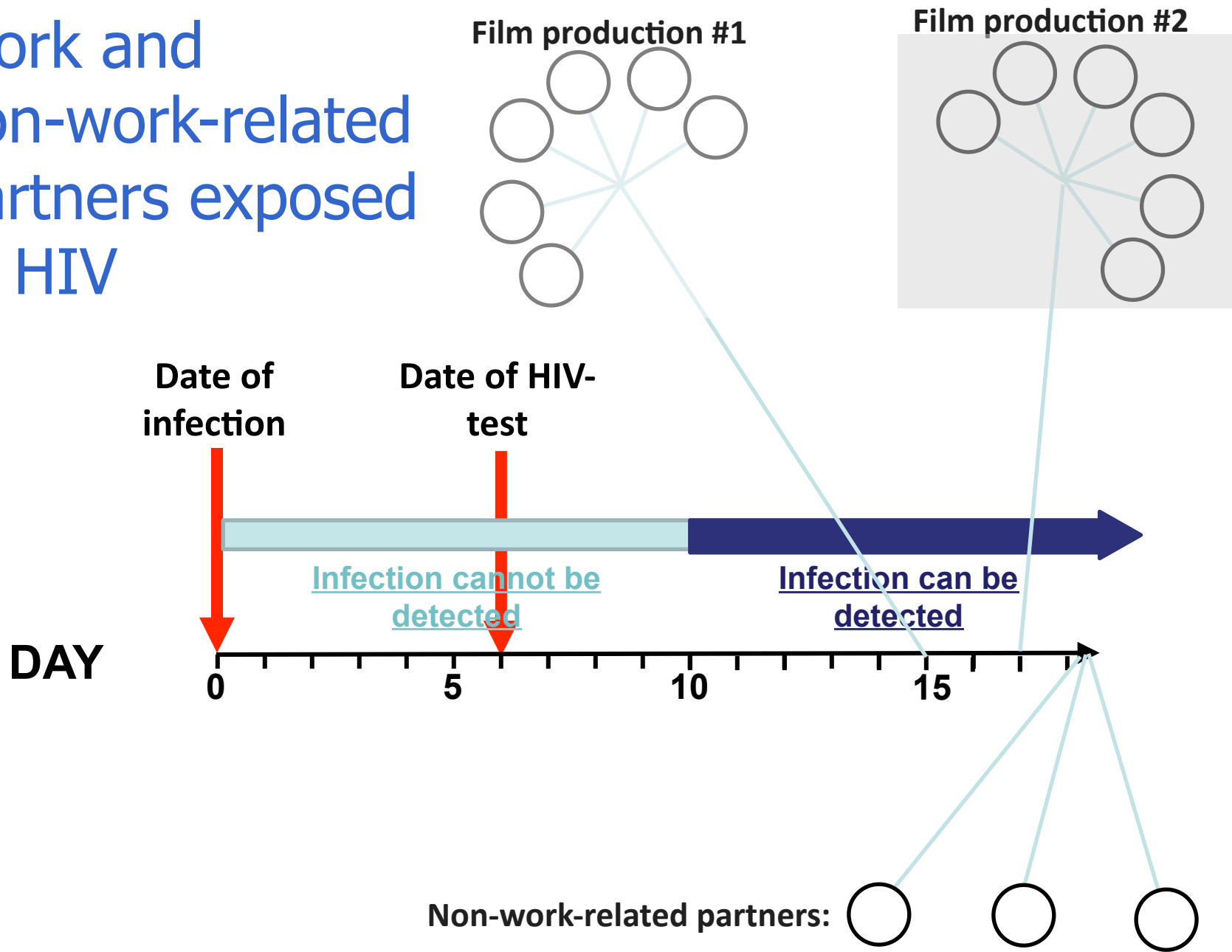
“Window period” for HIV testing



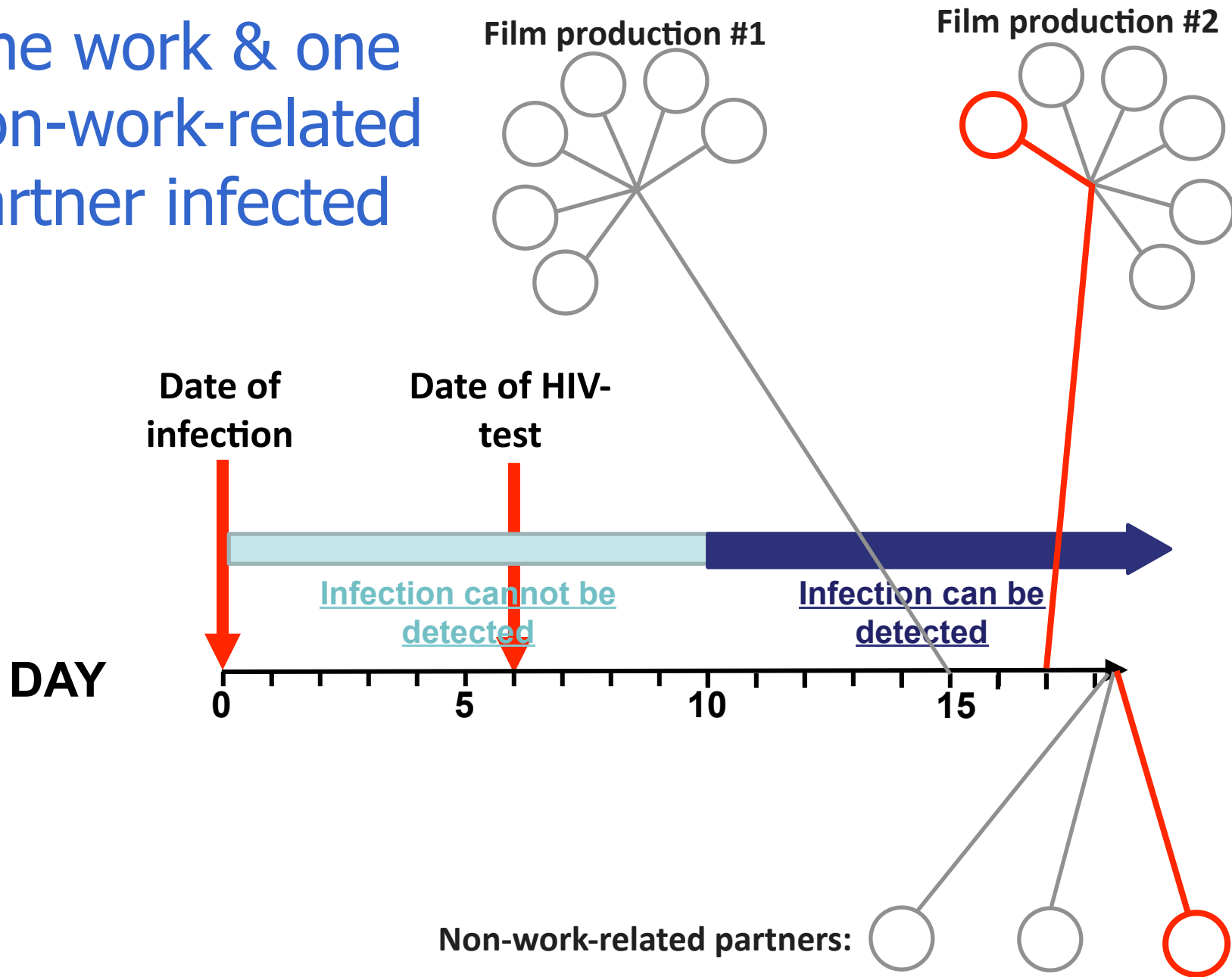
Performer's infection was not detectable



Work and non-work-related partners exposed to HIV



One work & one non-work-related partner infected



Film production #1

Film production #2

Date of infection

Date of HIV-test

DAY

0

5

10

15

Infection cannot be detected

Infection can be detected

Non-work-related partners:

Production Hold Lifted

October 20, 2014

OCTOBER 20, 2014



The current production hold has been lifted. FSC's statement is as follows:

The Free Speech Coalition announces that the production hold from last week has been lifted, and production can continue effective immediately. A production hold was called when it was determined that a performer in the PASS database might have been exposed to HIV in late September **after off-set contact**

with a performer from an out-of-state set that was not observing PASS protocols We called a production hold while we conducted precautionary testing with that performer and anyone he or she performed with. All precautionary testing has been completed and there is a medical determination that the performer pool has not been compromised.

Diane Duke, head of the Free Speech Coalition, thanked producers and performers for honoring the hold over the weekend.

"We know that production holds and moratoriums are difficult for performers and producers, but they are integral to the safety of the PASS performer pool. We also realize that the lack of information in these situations can also be frustrating; however, it's crucial that we maintain medical privacy for the performers involved."

"The PASS database and protocols are crucial to protecting performers. This is why we are working so doggedly on regulations that will encourage full compliance with PASS no matter where they shoot. All indications are that **full compliance with the PASS system continues to protect performers and prevent on-set transmissions.** In addition, our moratorium protocols effectively provided testing and prevented any compromise to the performer pool."

Adult film trade
association:
HIV transmission was
not work-related

Occupational Health Alert

December 2014

Occupational HIV Transmission in the Adult Entertainment Film Industry

Key Prevention Points

- Always use condoms
- Get tested frequently for HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases
- Consider HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)

What happened? A male adult entertainment actor obtained a test for HIV that was negative. Over the following two-week period, the actor had unprotected sex with several other male actors during two separate film shoots. During the second film shoot, he had symptoms of a viral infection. The actor went to a clinic and had another blood test that showed he had recently become infected with HIV. The local public health department initiated follow-up with the sexual contacts of this actor. Thus far, one of the male actors from the second film shoot has tested newly positive for HIV. Public health investigation and laboratory results provide very strong evidence that the actor transmitted HIV to the other actor as a result of unprotected sex during the film shoot.

Why is this important? The actor thought that he was "negative" for HIV at the time of the two film shoots, but in fact he was infected and probably transmitted HIV to another actor. Some adult entertainment film companies require actors to have a negative HIV test within 2 weeks prior to a film shoot. However, very early in an HIV infection the test can be negative even though the actor really does have HIV. In this case, the actor and production company thought he was HIV-negative during filming. Shortly after his negative test, HIV levels in his body rose rapidly to where he could infect other actors through unprotected sex. In addition, other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) can be transmitted by unprotected sex.

What should be done in light of this investigation?

- Correct and consistent use of condoms is known to reduce the risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. Adult entertainment film actors should use condoms, and film producers should require on-set condom use by actors. The California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) has determined that employers are required to furnish and ensure the use of condoms in the production of adult films at no cost to the actors.
- Actors should continue to be tested for HIV. Testing for other STDs should include urine, throat, and rectum tests. Actors should get vaccinated for hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and human papilloma virus (HPV); each of these diseases can be transmitted by unprotected sex.
- HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, is a daily oral medication that can help prevent HIV-negative individuals from acquiring the virus. In combination with condoms, PrEP can be an effective HIV prevention tool. PrEP, however, will not protect against other STDs and should NOT be used without the concurrent use of condoms. HIV-negative adult entertainment film actors should discuss the use of PrEP with their health care providers.

Actors should be aware that under state and federal occupational safety and health laws, film producers are required to provide safeguards to assure safe and healthy work environments for their employees. This includes protection from HIV and other bloodborne diseases.

For more information see:

Cal/OSHA "Vital Information For Workers and Employers in the Adult Film Industry"
<http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/adultfilmindustry.html>

Federal OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standard Fact Sheet
https://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_BloodborneFacts/bbfact01.pdf

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Guidelines
<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/prevention/research/prep/>

To obtain this document in an alternate format, call (510) 620-5757 (CA Relay Service: 711), & please allow at least 10 days.



The Occupational Health Branch in the California Department of Public Health is devoted to improving worker health and safety through prevention activities. See www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/ohb

OHB: Yes it was



Porn industry group blames condom law for drop in film permits



Adult-film performers Jessica Drake, left, and Barry Scott, lower right, are seated at a panel discussion on the passage of Measure 10 in Los Angeles for a panel discussion on the passage of Measure 10.

Los Angeles Times LOCAL / L.A. Now

This article is related to: Laws and Legislation, Crime, Law and Justice, Politics and Government, Freedom of the Press, HIV - AIDS



news > health

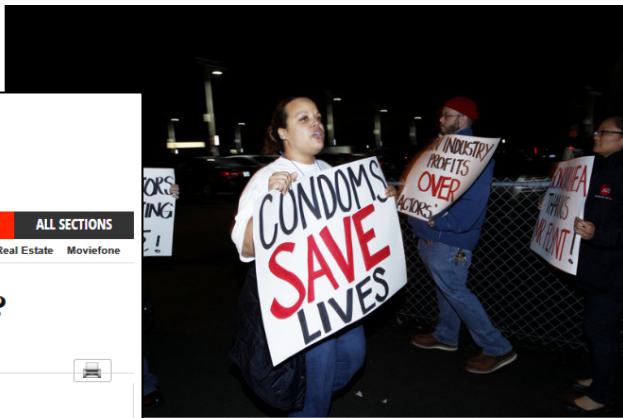
Adult Filmmakers Question Condom Requirement

MARCH 13, 2012 5:50 PM ET

STEPHANIE O'NEILL

from 89.3 KPCC

Listen to the Story
All Things Considered
3:58
+ Playlist Download Embed Transcript



AIDS Healthcare Foundation protest porn mogul Larry Flynt's refusal to follow a Los Angeles city law that requires condom use in adult films during the XBIZ Adult Film Awards on Jan 10, in Santa Monica Calif.

August 24, 2015

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Condoms In Porn: Common Sense Or Overreach?

Posted: 03/08/2012 4:38 pm EST | Updated: 03/08/2012 8:33 pm EST

165 139 52 11 167

Like Share Tweet Share Comment

In August of 2011, the adult film industry in Southern California voluntarily shut down production when a performer tested positive for HIV.

Less than a week later, more tests showed that the performer did not contract the often fatal disease, but the HIV scare gave momentum to a long-simmering movement to require all porn films in Southern California to use condoms.

At the beginning of this year, Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa signed into law a mandate that all adult film productions shot within city limits be required to use condoms. The law went into effect on Monday, although there are still questions about how enforceable it is.

The movement to require condom use in adult films has also gone county-wide, as the AIDS Healthcare Foundation collects petition signatures for a ballot measure that would expand the law across Los Angeles County. A recent update from February shows that the foundation is more than halfway there to collecting enough signatures to put the measure on the November 2012 ballots.

The condom use reforms definitely have their critics. City Attorney Carmen Trutanich filed a lawsuit against the city-wide effort, saying it

Health and Safety in the Adult Film Industry

To file a complaint related to hazards in the adult film industry, call ☎ (714) 558-4300.

A cluster of HIV infections in the adult film industry in Southern California in 2004 drew attention to **health hazards** in these work places. Since that time, public health agencies have additionally determined that workers in this industry are at risk for HIV, Hepatitis B, and Chlamydia.

Workers in this industry may not know how to protect themselves from these hazards, and where to go for help. This page provides information on how to protect themselves and failing to comply with standards.

Bloodborne Pathogens

The Cal/OSHA **bloodborne pathogens standard** requires employers to protect workers from serious diseases including HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C, which can be transmitted through exposure to blood and other potentially infectious materials. The major requirements of this standard include:

- Controlling exposures
- Personal protective equipment
- Hepatitis B vaccine
- Confidential medical record
- Procedures for exposure incidents
- Training

Controlling exposures

The **bloodborne pathogens standard** requires employers to use feasible **engineering and work practice controls** to protect workers from coming into contact with blood or other disease-carrying body fluids (referred to in the standard as "other potentially infectious material", or "OPIM"). Semen and vaginal fluid are always considered OPIM. Any other body fluid is considered OPIM if it's visibly contaminated with blood. Saliva is considered OPIM in connection with dental procedures because these procedures routinely cause saliva to be contaminated with blood.

Examples of engineering and work practice controls used in the adult film industry include:

- Simulation of sex acts using simulated fluids, acting, production and post-production techniques
- Ejaculation outside the partner's body
- Use of barriers, which protect the partner from contact with semen, vaginal fluids, mucous membranes, etc. Examples of barriers include **condoms** and dental dams (**Condoms** and dental dams can also be considered personal protective equipment for the partner who uses them)
- Plastic and other disposable materials to clean up sets
- Sharps containers for disposal of any blades, wires or broken glass.

Performers are exposed to potentially infectious materials

Performers are employees

BEFORE THE
STATE OF CALIFORNIA
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH
APPEALS BOARD

In the Matter of the Appeal of:

CYBERNET ENTERTAINMENT, LLC
dba KINK.COM
1800 Mission Steet
San Francisco, CA 94103

Employer

DOCKETS 14-R6D1-0364
through 0367

DECISION

Analysis:

A. The performers were employees, not independent contractors.

The Act holds employers responsible who have or exercise sufficient control over employees affected by a regulated condition, and which condition the cited employer has the ability to abate at the work site. (*The Office Professionals*, Cal/OSHA App. 92-604, Decision After Reconsideration (Jun. 19, 1995); *Petroleum Maintenance Company*, Cal/OSHA App. 81-594, Decision After Reconsideration (May 1, 1985).) The California Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1973 (the Act), Labor Code Section 6304 provides that the definition of "Employer" has the same meaning as in Labor Code Section 3300. Section 3300(c) states that "every person. . . , which has any natural person in

BEFORE THE
STATE OF CALIFORNIA
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH
APPEALS BOARD

In the Matter of the Appeal of:

TREASURE ISLAND MEDIA, INC.
351 9TH Street, Suite 302
San Francisco, CA 94103

Employer

DOCKETS 11-R6D1-1093
through 1095

DECISION

Participants are "employees" not "independent contractors"

TIM maintains that the participants are not "employees" but are "independent contractors". TIM does not dispute that the production crew are employees. To sustain the citation, the Division must prove that a relationship of employer/employee existed between TIM and the worker exposed to the

Worker protection is not optional



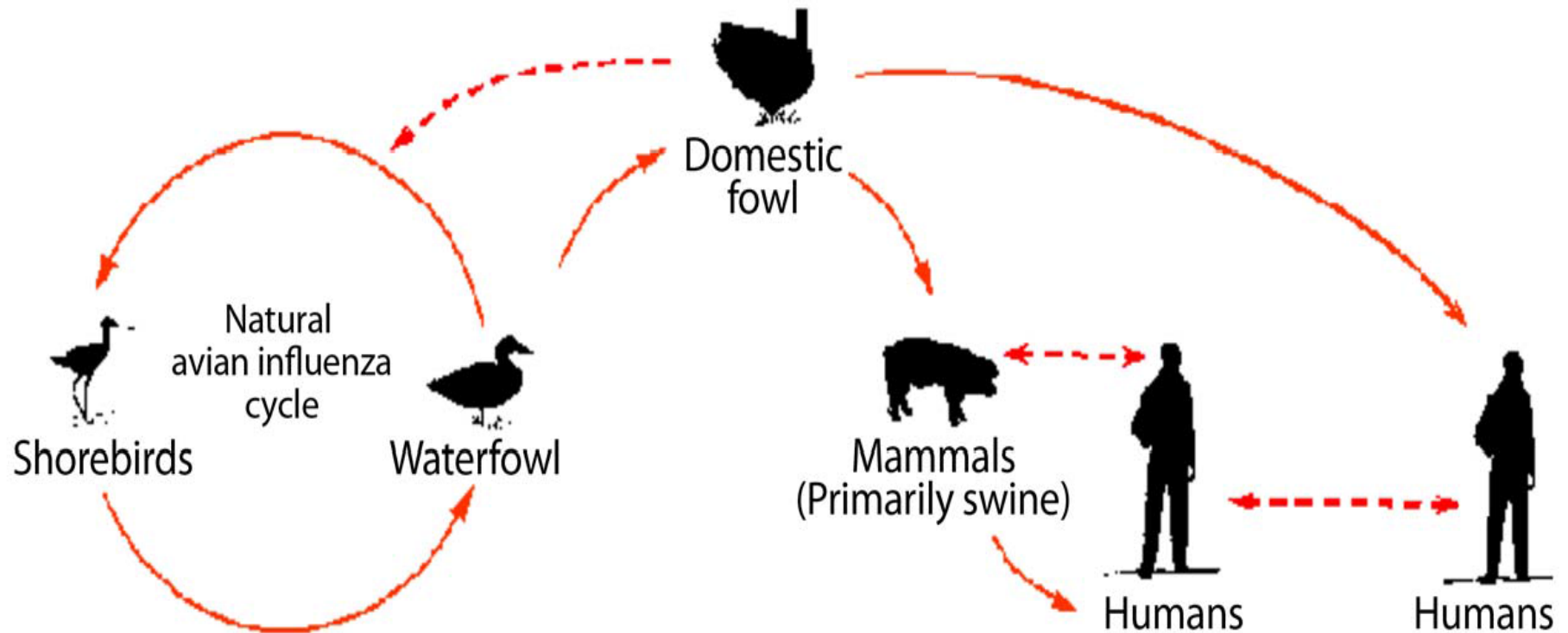
Other Cal/OSHA standards in the works

- Workplace violence prevention in healthcare
- Housekeeping in the hotel and hospitality industry
- Antineoplastic drugs in healthcare
- Process safety management in refineries
- PPE for firefighters
- Airborne contaminant PELs?

Emerging issue: Avian influenza in CA poultry industry



Current and future concerns about the transmission of avian influenza virus (H5 N1)



CA avian influenza poultry outbreaks in 2015

- January 22, 2015: influenza A virus subtype H5N8
 - Commercial turkey flock
 - Stanislaus County
- February 12, 2015: influenza A virus H5N8
 - broiler chickens and ducks
 - Kings County
- March 17, 2015: influenza A virus H7N3
 - Commercial turkey flock
 - Merced County

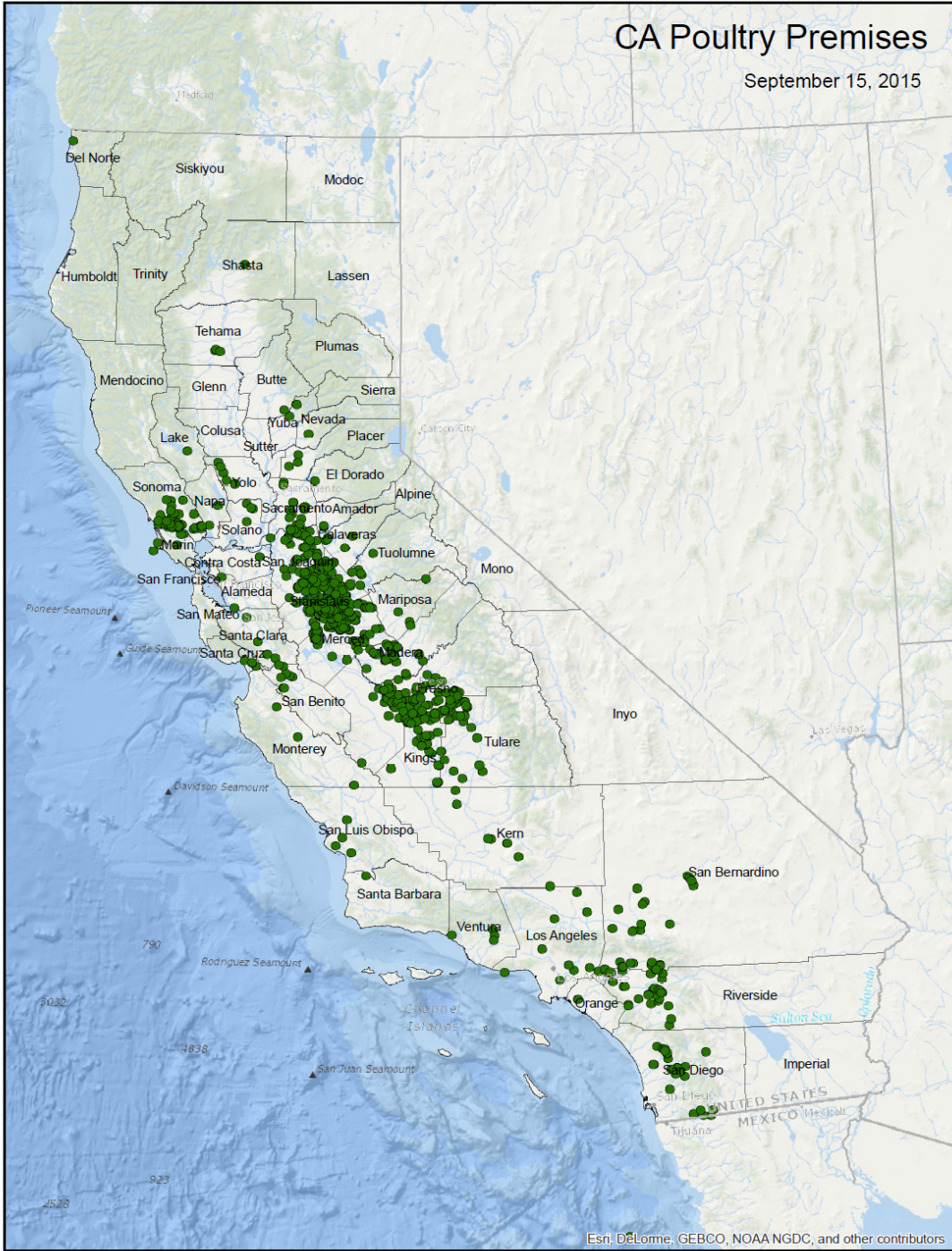
Worker risk for Avian Influenza

ATD-Zoonotic Standard, 5199.1

- “Exposed” = direct contact with sick birds, carcasses, feces, litter from potentially infected poultry
- Those who handle, cull (kill), transport, or dispose of birds, or clean/disinfect areas with birds or waste
- Poultry farmers, cullers, veterinarians



CA poultry industry locations

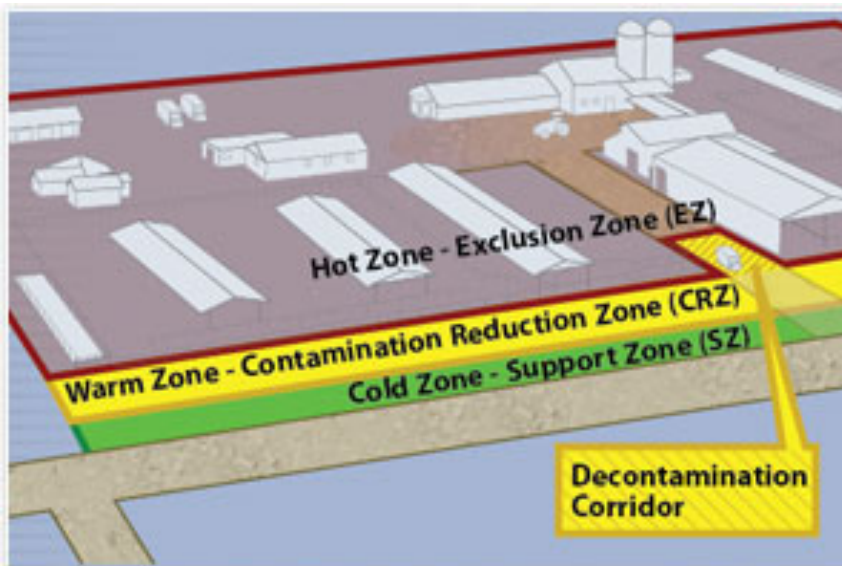


Poultry outbreak: Multi-employer emergency response

- USDA / CDFA Animal Health Emergency Response
- Incident Commander and Safety Officer
- Employers
 - Farm or poultry producer
 - Farmer's contractors
 - USDA contractors
 - CDFA, local responders

Farm biosecurity

- Isolation
- Traffic control
- Sanitation



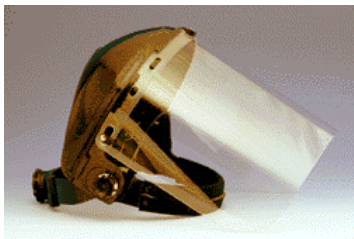
PPE examples



Safety glasses



Safety goggles



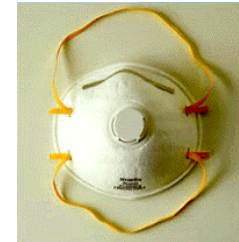
Face Shield



Level C PPE with Tyvek splash suit and APR respirators



Nitrile gloves



N-95 respirator



1/2 face APR



Full face APR



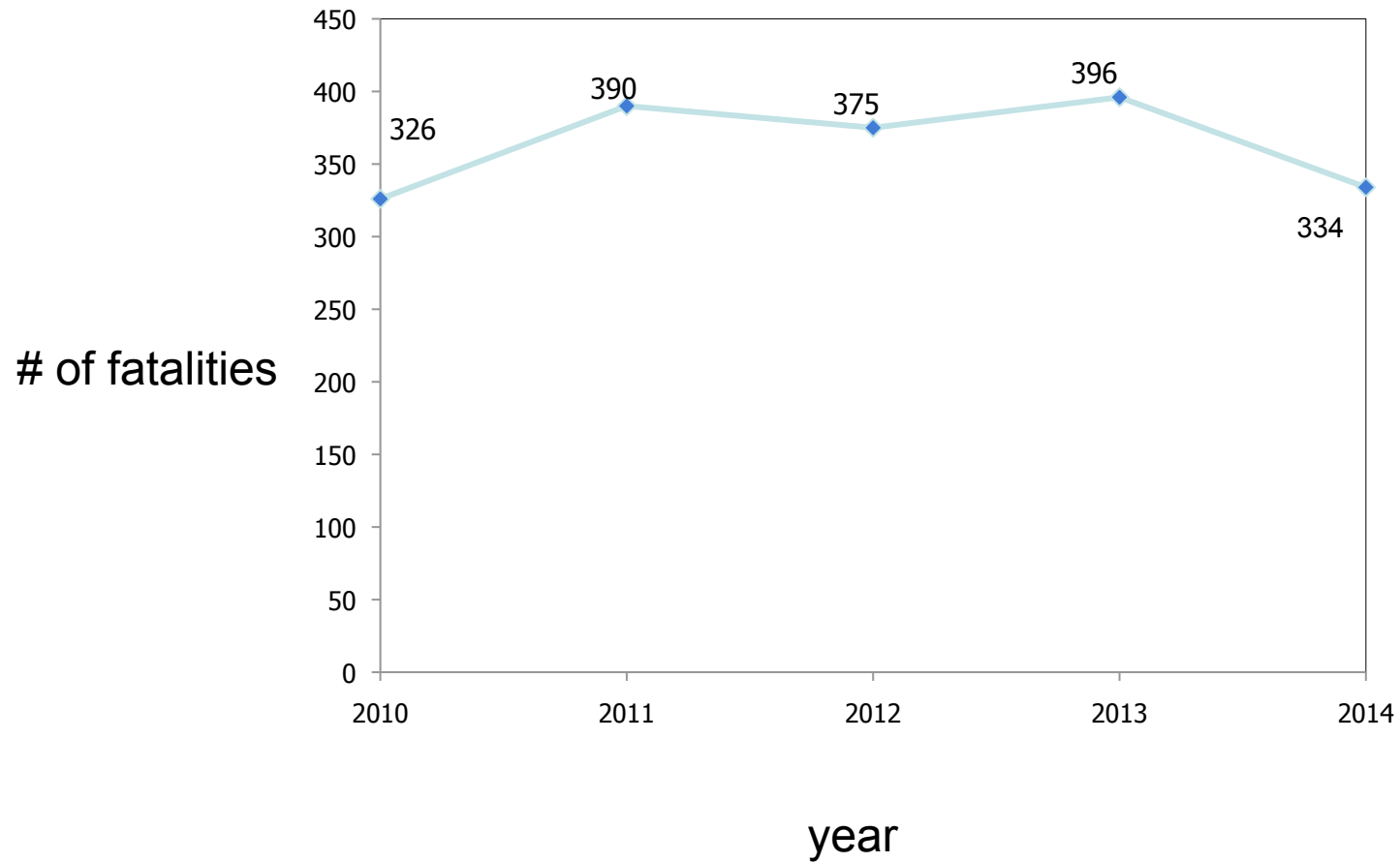
PAPR

Follow-up of exposed workers

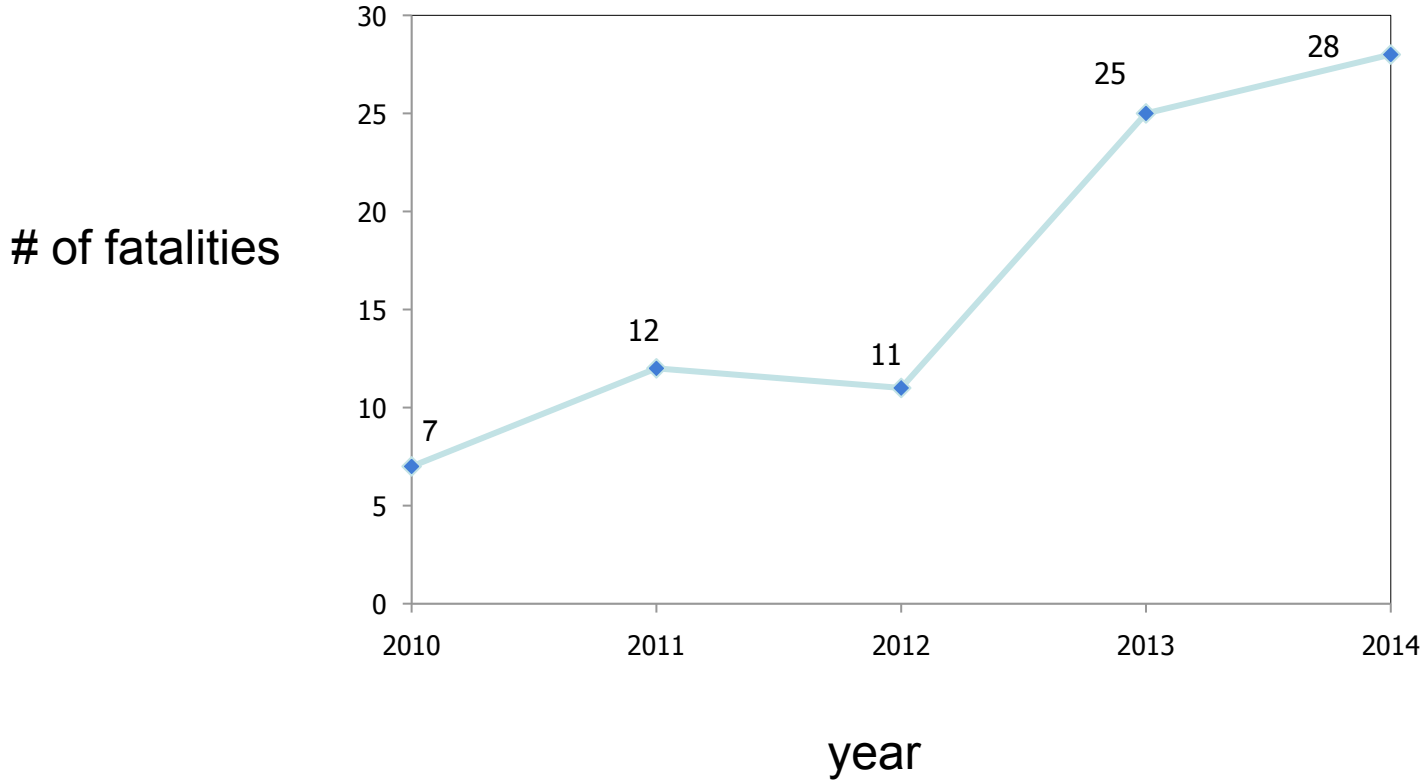
- Overseen by local or state health dept.
- Reasons for follow-up
 - Symptom surveillance
 - Specimens for testing
 - Timely notification of results
 - Monitor delivery of antiviral therapy
 - Note unusual clinical presentations or complications
- Follow-up period
 - Throughout exposure plus 10 days

Highlights of other 2015 projects

Total Worker Fatalities by Year, California, 2010-2014



Fatalities in Landscaping Industry, California, 2010-2014



Preventing Worker Drownings Digital Story




<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/ohb-face/Pages/Stories.aspx>

Safer, effective cockroach control for buses & trains



OCCUPATIONAL PESTICIDE ILLNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH BRANCH



Safer and Effective Cockroach Control for Buses and Trains

Cockroaches can be a big problem on buses and trains, but the pesticides used to treat them can cause worker illness.

Spraying or fogging pesticides can cause worker illness

Pesticides used to treat cockroaches contain chemicals that can make people sick if they breathe in, touch, or swallow them. These pesticides are often applied as a fog, aerosol, or small mist particles. If pesticides are in the air when people enter the area, they can be breathed in and cause harm. Some of the chemicals used, such as pyrethrins and tetramethrin, can cause asthma even if used in very small amounts.

Change the conditions that attract cockroaches

Remove what attracts cockroaches—as often as possible clean up crumbs, food, wrappers, and standing water. Periodically deep clean to remove food from crevices.

Avoid pesticide spraying and fogging

- Pesticides applied using sprayers or foggers may reduce cockroach populations temporarily, but other, safer alternatives provide more effective long-term control. With spraying and fogging, often cockroaches will scatter, hide, and come out later.

PREVENTION POINTS

- Remove what attracts cockroaches: food, water, and shelter
- Avoid spraying and fogging
- Use non-chemical and gel bait treatments

Municipal bus agencies have followed these prevention points to successfully control cockroaches.

as gel baits and bait stations, and only in cracks, crevices, and other out-of-the-way areas.


- When baits are needed, they should be applied at least quarterly to effectively control cockroach populations.
- Products that target only insects, like insect growth regulators, are generally a safer choice.
- If spraying is ever done, at a minimum, follow the pesticide label regarding ventilation and waiting time before anyone can re-enter the vehicle. For added safety, increase the waiting time and use a fan or other active ventilation.

Use safer AND more effective non-chemical and gel bait treatments

- Hire a Pest Control Operator (PCO) certified in safer treatment methods (also known as Integrated Pest Management or IPM) to monitor and address a cockroach problem.
 - The PCO should have a variety of methods for safely flushing out and removing cockroaches such as using compressed air, hair dryers, steam, and bug vacuums. Chemical flushing agents should not be used. The remaining cockroaches can be killed with gel bait.
- If the PCO decides that a pesticide application is necessary:
 - The safest and least toxic products should be used, such

CASE STUDY

A bus driver was driving a bus that had recently been sprayed with pesticide to kill cockroaches. The driver developed a cough, trouble breathing, wheezing, chest pain, burning eyes, and blurred vision. The passengers got off the bus because they also had trouble breathing.



Safer pest control on buses prevents pesticide illness

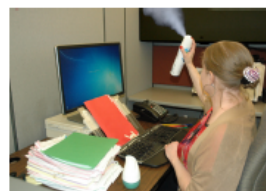
JUNE 2015

Fragrances and work-related asthma



Occupational Health Branch
California Department of Public Health 

Fragrances and Work-Related Asthma: Information for Employers



Office worker using air freshener at her desk.

Perfumes and fragrances used in personal care products, cleaning products, and air fresheners in the workplace can cause or trigger asthma. They contain many different chemicals, including several known to cause asthma, even in people who have never had asthma before.

What is work-related asthma?

Asthma is a chronic lung disease where the flow of air is decreased, making it hard to breathe. Asthma is work-related when it is caused or made worse by something at work. Symptoms can start right after an employee breathes in a substance, or hours after leaving work. Sometimes a person can suddenly develop work-related asthma from substances they have worked around for years. An employee experiencing wheezing, chest tightness, cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing, should be seen by a doctor. The employee should tell the doctor if exposures at work seem to increase or cause the symptoms. Work-related asthma can be serious. The earlier the exposure is stopped, the more the person's asthma can improve.

Work-related asthma in California

The Work-Related Asthma Prevention Program (WRAPP) tracks information about California workers with asthma and helps workers avoid getting asthma from their jobs. WRAPP has found over 250 work-related asthma cases from fragrance exposures in many indoor work settings – including schools, hospitals, offices, and manufacturing.

Case Report - Use of air freshener sent a fellow employee to the emergency room

A 25-year-old woman with asthma worked at a child care center doing data entry. Her workplace had meetings about not spraying chemicals in the office, but did not have a written fragrance-free policy. A co-worker sprayed air freshener in the office. The data entry clerk immediately began having severe asthma symptoms and had to go to the emergency room. She also had to take oral steroids to control her asthma. The data entry clerk reported that other co-workers had asthma symptoms as a result of air freshener use.

Case Report - A security guard had to leave his job because of fragrance use

A 50-year-old man with asthma worked as a security guard for 9 years. Whenever anyone at work was wearing strong cologne or used a product with fragrance, it triggered his asthma. He didn't want to tell people not to wear scented products, and his asthma just kept getting worse. A fellow employee got scented lotion on the guard's jacket, which worsened his asthma symptoms and gave him hives. He went to the emergency room 6 times before he finally had to leave his job.

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April 2014

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Focus on...

Palm Tree Trimming Tragedy – A New ‘Digital Story’ for Workers’ Memorial Day

When Roberto Garcia’s mother asked him not to go to work on June 9, 2012, the 35-year-old tree trimmer told her the task would not take long. She never saw her son alive again.

Roberto died of suffocation that day when the palm fronds he was cutting fell on him, trapping him against the palm’s trunk. Roberto’s tragic death and recommendations on how others can avoid similar incidents are the focus of a new digital story by OHB’s [California Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation program](#).

The six-minute video shows the events that led up to Roberto’s death and what could have been done to prevent it.



[Watch the video](#)

[Watch the video in Spanish](#)

Resources

[Additional Palm Tree Safety Materials](#)

[Digital Stories](#)

[OHB](#) improves California worker health and safety through prevention activities. [More than](#)

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- OHB website: www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/OHB
- Workplace hazard helpline:
1-866-282-5516 (toll-free in CA)
- Invite us to speak at your events
- **Call/email me if interested in working at OHB**
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