The Corporation of the City of Windsor

AIDS POLICY
(Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome)

The Corporation of the City of Windsor understands and respects the human and civil rights of all its employees and recognizes its obligation to provide a safe work environment for its employees and the safe delivery of services to its citizens. Also, it acknowledges that employees experiencing illness have the right to pursue those activities which their conditions allow, including continuing to work. As long as employees are able to perform the essential duties of their job in a satisfactory manner, and as long as medical evidence indicates that they pose no health or safety threat to themselves or others, the Corporation of the City of Windsor will be guided by the usual procedures governing personnel decisions.

AIDS and HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) infections pose a serious threat to everyone's health and well being, and to date, no medical cure nor preventive vaccine has been found. While the best available medical opinion indicates that AIDS cannot be contracted through casual contact or workplace activities, many people have serious concerns and need assurance that their safety will be protected. The City of Windsor is committed to addressing the concerns related to AIDS and HIV infections in a responsible and sensitive manner. This involves ensuring the health and safety of employees and the general public while protecting the individual rights of all employees as defined by law and policy.

The Corporation of the City of Windsor:

(a) Recognizes that employees with AIDS and HIV infection have the right to engage in their regular employment as long as they are able to perform the essential duties in a satisfactory manner, and as long as medical evidence indicates that they pose no health or safety threat to themselves and others as it applies to their workplace;

(b) Will ensure the right to privacy, and all medical information will be held in strict confidence;

(c) Is obliged to provide a safe work environment and a safe delivery of services to citizens. All situations in which employees are exposed to blood or body fluids be reviewed and safety procedures including appropriate protective clothing and devices will be implemented;

(d) Is committed to providing up-to-date information to employees on HIV infection to alleviate any unfounded fears;

(e) Will seek to balance the rights of an employee with HIV infection with the rights of other employees and the general public in the event an employee with AIDS may pose a risk to others.

GUIDELINES RELATED TO AIDS POLICY

The "AIDS In The Workplace" policy should be used in conjunction with the following guidelines.

A. EDUCATION

The City of Windsor does provide health education information about AIDS and HIV infection in terms of its control and spread, in order to decrease the anxiety associated with this disease. The Human Resources Department through its Health & Safety Officer provides such material and will schedule education programs as needed.
B. WORKING WITH EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE AIDS OR MAY HAVE HIV INFECTION

As long as an employee is able to perform the essential duties of the job, the management and personnel practices will be the same as with any other employee. The Ontario Human Rights Code prohibits discrimination against or harassment of an employee, by either the employer or co-workers on the basis of handicap or perceived handicap, including that caused by an HIV infection.

An infected employee may continue to work as long as their doctor and/or medical practitioner assigned by the City agree that they are well enough and that they pose no risk.

An employee with AIDS or HIV infection has a right to privacy and to have medical information held in the strictest confidence.

There is no medical justification to refuse to work with someone who is infected with the AIDS virus that poses no health risk; therefore the Corporation will not support employees who adopt this stance.

C. FACTS ABOUT AIDS

AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) describes the most serious form of an infection caused by a virus called the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

The HIV or AIDS virus is very fragile and survives only a short time outside the human body.

The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is not highly contagious and is much less so than hepatitis B virus.

The fact that a person has tested positive for HIV infection antibodies does not mean that he/she has AIDS, only that the virus has entered the bloodstream some time in the past. However, it does mean that the person may infect others through one of the four mechanisms set out below.

AIDS is transmitted:
- through sexual contact with an infected person;
- through sharing contaminated needles or syringes;
- through the direct infusion of an infected blood or blood products;
- from an infected mother to an infant in the womb or during breast feeding.

There is no recorded case of AIDS being transmitted:
- through casual contact with people or objects;
- from toilet seats, sharing food or kitchenware, swimming pools or water fountains;
- through a handshake or a hug;
- through bites from a mosquito or other insects;

There is also no recorded case of AIDS being contracted:
- through saliva, tears or feces;
- through every day contact between members of families;
- through non-sexual contact with a co-worker;
- though food preparation or food handling.
There is no evidence that being in the same office, working on the same assembly line or using the same equipment as someone with AIDS, even for a long period of time, puts an employee at risk of becoming infected with the AIDS virus.

D. **PROTECTING AGAINST AIDS** (i.e., in the workplace when vulnerable to blood and body fluids of others as well as self)

The same precautions taken to protect against hepatitis B and other blood-borne infections are applicable to protect against HIV:

- frequent washing of hands;
- covering of cuts and sores on hands;
- cleaning of high risk equipment according to recommended procedures;
- using disposable gloves and other protective clothing and equipment according to procedures;
- using hygienic mouth piece where possible for mouth to mouth resuscitation;
- cleaning anything contaminated by blood or other body fluids, using a 1:9 solution of bleach and water.

Health Care workers and community service workers should be aware that citizens are concerned about AIDS and, in order to reassure them, as well as to protect themselves, should demonstrate a high level of attention to hygiene techniques.

Employees are encouraged to advise management or the Health & Safety Officer of any concerns regarding the transmission of AIDS in the workplace or the efficacy of safety procedures. Action will be taken by the Corporation to address all concerns.

E. **DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY**

While the Human Resources Department is responsible for training and literature related to the corporate policy, it remains each Department's responsibility to develop and maintain specific work practices and procedures, (i.e., section D to protect their employees against AIDS) based on assessment of job functions in each Department.