

Toolbox Talk

06. Biological Hazards



What?

- Biological agents like bacteria and viruses can cause disease and illness by infecting the body when they are inhaled or injected, or by penetrating the skin causing allergic reactions in people that are sensitive to them. They can be found in various workplaces where there is sewage, contaminated water, body fluids or farm animals

Why?

- Biological agents can cause serious illness such as:-
- Legionella bacteria: found in poorly maintained water systems, and when inhaled can cause legionnaires' disease
- Weil's disease (or leptospirosis): found in treatment plants, sewage, and stagnant water contaminated by rat urine, which can enter open wounds
- Blood borne viruses: (BBVs - hepatitis and HIV etc): infection occurs through direct contact with bodily fluids or blood e.g. through needles or open cuts
- Animal and bird diseases: found at farms, veterinary practices, animal houses and parts of buildings where significant accumulations of animal or bird droppings can occur

Do



- ✓ Properly assess the risk of contamination
- ✓ Wear correct PPE to prevent exposure
- ✓ Use remote cleaning methods where possible
- ✓ Report any contamination immediately
- ✓ Always wash your hands with an antibacterial agent
- ✓ Cover open wounds and cuts, etc.
- ✓ Get attention immediately if symptoms occur
- ✓ Consider vaccinations only if a high risk of exposure remains after the above controls have been put in place

Don't



- ✗ Touch any suspect material or spilled body fluids
- ✗ Work without PPE
- ✗ Enter premises where biological hazards are known to be present without knowing the emergency procedures



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