
Quality, Health, Safety, Environmental & Energy Manual:

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Leptospirosis

Before doing any type of work all team members who may be exposed must carry out an assessment of the task to be undertaken. This will include the equipment to be worked on, the task itself, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements, the work area and environment, plus the tools and equipment required to carry out the job safely. Team members must consult their team leader if they are not satisfied the job can be carried out in a safe manner.

Leptospirosis is a bacterial disease, also called Weil's disease. It is an infection you can get from animals most commonly rats, mice, cows, pigs and dogs. Humans can become infected through contact with urine (or other body fluids, except saliva) from infected animals and contact with water, soil, or food contaminated with the urine of infected animals. It's rare in the UK.

If contracted there is an incubation period of at least three days. Symptoms may start with a flu-like illness with a persistent and severe headache, which can lead to vomiting and muscle pains. Ultimately this could lead to jaundice, meningitis and kidney failure. In rare cases the disease can be life threatening.

If you think you may have been in contact with this bacterium and have any of these symptoms you should seek medical attention immediately.

Precautions

- 1.0 Ensure the working area is clean and suitable for the work to be undertaken (SWP-01, Work Area). If there are any signs of rodent activity on the truck, liaise with the site contact and request that the equipment to be cleaned down prior to commencing any work. Contact your leader for further advise.
- 1.1 Ensure that any cuts or scratches are covered with a waterproof plaster.
- 1.2 Wear appropriate PPE:
 - a. Impermeable gloves (rubber or disposable, nitrile or latex type)
 - b. Exposed skin is covered (coveralls, waterproofs if required)
 - c. Goggles and dusk mask.
- 1.3 Avoid touching dead rodents or their excrement.
- 1.4 When working in a suspected contaminated area, team members must avoid contact with their mouth, eyes and nose until they can properly clean and decontaminate.
- 1.5 After working, and at regular intervals, ensure that hands, forearms and any areas that could have been exposed are thoroughly washed and cleaned.
- 1.6 If a team member scratches or cuts themselves whilst working in a potentially contaminated area, they must wash the wound immediately and cover with a waterproof plaster.

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- 1.7 Drinks or food must not be consumed in contaminated areas
- 1.8 Before smoking or consuming any food or drink ensure that hands and forearms are cleaned thoroughly.
- 1.9 Wash potentially contaminated clothing as soon as possible.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS

- 2.0 Refer to Quality, Health, Safety & Environmental Manual safety & Environmental Manual procedure SM-09—Employment of Young Persons for precise definitions on children and young persons.
- 2.1 “Children” will not be involved with tasks where there is a risk of working in a contaminated area. They may be allowed to observe such operations and work practices; however, they must take no active part, always remain a safe distance away and be under the constant supervision of a competent person.