



Biohazards

Biohazards are materials or human waste that cause infections or disease. If you work in areas with wastewater, medical waste, or live sanitary sewer lines, for example, you should assume that **all** surfaces are contaminated (have germs).

Alberto's Story

Alberto was repairing a sewer line. He was not wearing waterproof gloves, and some of the sewage got on his hands. A few days later, he noticed a cut on his hand that was red and sore. He went to the doctor and learned that he had a serious infection probably caused by the raw sewage.

- ✖ What caused this incident?
- ✖ How could this have been prevented?
- ✖ Have you ever been harmed by a biohazard, like exposure to raw sewage or potentially infectious material, or do you know someone who has? If so, what happened?

- Wash your hands well, before eating or drinking and when work is completed, to prevent spreading contaminants.
- Clean, treat, and report **any** cuts or wounds right away to prevent an infection.
- Use waterproof gloves, boots, and face protection when you will have direct contact with sewage. Use a face shield if there might be splashing.
- Keep contaminated gloves, boots, face protection, and other equipment away from areas where food is eaten or stored.
- For pipeline and other inspections, use remote-controlled robotic cameras to minimize human exposure, if possible.
- Remove contaminated clothing at the site, if possible. Your employer should explain the decontamination process.
- Wash clothing at a high temperature (at least 160°F) to destroy all germs.

Remember This

- Avoid direct contact with sewage.

How can we stay safe today?

What will we do at the worksite to prevent illnesses from biohazards?

OSHA Standard: 1926.28



Biohazards



- Avoid direct contact with sewage. Use waterproof gloves, boots, and face protection if you will have direct contact with raw sewage. Use a face shield if you might get splashed.
- Wash your hands well to prevent spreading contaminants. Clean, treat, and report **any** cuts or wounds immediately to prevent an infection.
- Keep contaminated gloves, boots, face protection, and other equipment away from areas where food is eaten or stored.

**GET
INFORMATION**

CDC/NIOSH INFO: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) | TTY: 1-800-232-6348 | cdc.gov/info | cdc.gov/niosh

CPWR: Contact 301-578-8500 | cpwr-r2p@cpwr.com | www.cpwr.com/toolbox-talks

DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 2022-129 | DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26616/NIOSHPUB2022129> | August 2022