Infectious diseases

Explain dangers

Infectious diseases are caused by microorganisms, including bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites. These microorganisms can cause harmful health effects within our bodies.

Common ways a person can get an infectious disease include:

• Person-to-person contact
• Contact with certain insects or animals
• Exposure to bodily fluids such as blood
• Touching contaminated items.

Infectious disease symptoms can vary from person to person, and are dependent on the disease itself. The following is a list of infectious diseases that you may come across in the workplace, along with their common symptoms.

Infectious Disease	Common Symptoms
Coronavirus (SARS, MERS, COVID-19)	Fever, cough, difficulty breathing, sore throat
Legionnaire's disease	Dry cough, difficulty breathing, chest pain, fever
West Nile virus	Headache, body ache, joint pain, vomiting, diarrhea, rash
Lyme disease	Skin rash, fever, headache, muscle and/or joint pain
Hepatitis B	Fever, tiredness, nausea, stomach pain, loss of appetite
Seasonal influenza ("the flu")	Fever, headache, cough, sore throat, tiredness, runny nose,
Norovirus	Vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramps, muscle aches, headache, tiredness
Measles	Fever, cough, red/puffy eyes, runny nose, rash
Rabies	Headache, fever, agitation, convulsions
Histoplasmosis	Fever, cough, chills, body aches, headache, chest pain

Identify controls

• Get vaccinated. Immunization can significantly reduce your chances of getting sick (or the severity of your symptoms). It also helps reduce the spread of disease within the community. Vaccines are available for diseases such as:
    – Hepatitis B
    – Measles
    – Influenza
    – COVID-19
• Always cough into your sleeve or a tissue.
• Avoid touching your nose, eyes, and mouth with unwashed hands.
• Regularly clean and disinfect work equipment.
• Wear gloves if you are handling any bodily fluids or equipment containing bodily fluids.
• Do not share any personal items, such as towels and clothing, with your co-workers.
• Frequently wash/sanitize your hands. If using an alcohol-based hand rub, ensure it has at least 60% alcohol content. Hands should be washed/sanitized:
    – Before taking lunch/breaks, and before leaving work
    – After removing gloves or any other PPE.
    – Do not use hand sanitizer if your hands are soiled. Wash with soap and water instead.
• If you find a needle or syringe, always assume it is contaminated. Follow company procedures for safe disposal.
• Notify your supervisor if you feel unwell, including if you are vomiting, have a fever, or have diarrhea. Do not come to work if you are experiencing any symptoms.

Demonstrate

With your crew, go over your company's sick-leave policy. Review:

• Whom to notify when sick
• What the expectations are when you call in sick
• When you can return to work.