

Sewage

List sewage hazards on site.

Explain dangers

Sewage contains micro-organisms such as bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites. These can be particularly active in summer.

Exposure to equipment or material contaminated by sewage can cause

- Gastroenteritis (stomach cramps, abdominal pain, diarrhea, vomiting)
- Hepatitis (inflammation of the liver, jaundice)
- Occupational asthma (breathlessness, tight chest, wheezing)
- Infection of eyes and skin.

Sewage commonly infects workers by

- Hand-to-mouth contact during eating, drinking, and smoking or by wiping the face with contaminated hands
- Skin contact through cuts, scratches, or penetrating wounds
- Inhaling dust contaminated by living or dead micro-organisms.

Identify controls

- Wear the personal protective equipment (PPE) and clothing provided by your employer, such as waterproof gloves and coveralls, rubber boots, safety goggles, face shield, and N95 respirator.
- Wash with clean water, soap, and paper towels. Shower for heavy contamination.

- Store clean equipment and clothing separately from dirty equipment and clothing. Don't mix them up.
- Use the designated clean area for eating and smoking. Change out of contaminated clothing and wash up before eating or smoking.
- Always wash your hands well before touching your face, eating, drinking, or smoking. Keep your fingernails short.
- Where contamination is heavy, you must
 - shower and change out of work clothes before leaving the job
 - never take contaminated clothing home for washing.
- Wear disposable clothing and throw it away at the end of the day. Or wash contaminated clothing with a bleach solution.
- Don't forget to clean your work tools and the bottom of work boots after exposure.
- Get shots or boosters for polio, tetanus, diphtheria, typhoid fever, and hepatitis.
- If sewage gets in your eyes, flush them immediately with clean water.
- Keep open cuts, sores, and scrapes well covered with dry, clean bandages.
- Restrict access to areas where sewage may be present and put up signs to warn workers about the hazard.
- Seek medical attention if you experience any symptoms of exposure to micro-organisms. That includes fever, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach cramps, and skin rash.

Demonstrate

With your crew, inspect clean and contaminated areas on site.

Identify precautions being taken in dirty areas.

Check that all workers have the required PPE and know how to use it.

If they have to work in any confined spaces, ask if they have received the required training.