

TAKE CONTROL

Contact with, or Exposure to Biological Factors

This information bulletin has been produced to assist in the prevention of workplace injury and disease. By identifying causes and assessing and controlling risks you can take control of health and safety in your workplace.

Risk indicators in the workplace

Some things to look for include:

- Uncontrolled work with materials or animals harbouring viruses, bacterium, fungi and parasites;
- Clinical waste containing needles, human tissues and infected waste products disposed of in ordinary rubbish bins;
- Potentially infected materials, such as needles, left in general work areas;
- Infectious areas not properly labelled or contained;
- Safe handling equipment and biological safety cabinets not available for use;
- Incomplete sterilisation of potentially infected, reusable equipment.

Examples of what can be done to stop such occurrences from happening

Employers should, for example, make sure that:

- Adequate handling enclosures and high quality ventilation systems are installed;
- Infection control procedures are implemented;
- Appropriate personal protective clothing and equipment is provided and maintained (for example, surgical gloves in surgeries, heavy duty gloves for rubbish collectors);
- Waste is disposed of properly in well designed, labelled containers;
- Adequate numbers of waste containers exist in the workplace;
- High house keeping standards are kept;
- Single use equipment is not re-used;
- High standards of personal hygiene is maintained at work;
- Workers are provided with information and education about the risks of infection;
- Food consumption and smoking are prohibited in the work area;
- Work practices are designed to minimise splashing or contact with waste products.

To find out more

The [Workplace Health and Safety Act](#) and the [Workplace Health and Safety Regulations](#) outline the minimum standards and the process to manage occupational health and safety in your workplace.

Specific regulations to note in respect of this topic are:

Regulation 54	Workplace Amenities
Regulation 55	Airborne Contaminants
Regulation 58	Exposure to Certain Risks
Regulation 70	Ventilation

Australian Standards applicable to this topic include:

AS 3666	Air-handling and water systems of buildings – Microbial control
NOHSC	National Code of Practice for the Control of Work Related Exposure to Hepatitis and HIV (blood-borne) Viruses

NT WorkSafe kindly acknowledges WorkCover SA.

For further information please contact NT Worksafe on 1800 019 115 or visit www.worksafe.nt.gov.au