



HSEM BULLETIN

Reducing health risk for workers handling sewage, biosolids or recycled water

Who needs to read this?

All Curtin University Staff, Students and Contractors

Background



The Department of Health and the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS) have produced a fact sheet to provide information and best practice guidance for organisations and workers handling human effluent (sewage), biosolids or recycled water.

There is a risk of pathogens being present in treated sewage, biosolids or recycled water even if the human effluent treated at wastewater treatment plants has been disinfected.

People who may be at risk of exposure include:

- Workers and laboratory staff handling sewage or recycled water samples or biosolids or contaminated soil samples
- Plumbers, irrigators and other people involved in maintenance work for wastewater systems or recycled water
- Workers applying biosolids to land
- Operators of recycled water schemes
- Workers at sewage treatment plants
- Workers transporting septage from septic tanks to licenced facilities



This guidance document provides both workers and employers with details on the more common hazards when handling human effluent and the best practice preventive measures required to manage risks.

[Read more](#)

Recommendations

- Ensure safe systems of work are in place
- Provide safe work practices and information, instruction, training and supervision
- Encourage an environment of consultation and co-operation
- Provide personal protective equipment (PPE), and ensure there are systems for PPE inspection, maintenance, cleaning and storage
- Provide or support occupational immunisations on a risk basis.

Who do we call with questions?

If you have any queries, please contact Health, Safety and Emergency Management on 9266 4900 or email healthandsafety@curtin.edu.au.

References

DMIRS - [Factsheet 20 July 2018](#)

Curtin - [Immunisation and Vaccination Guidelines](#)

Curtin - [Personal Protective Equipment Guidelines](#)

Curtin - [Health and Safety Risk Assessment Guidelines](#)

Curtin - [Incident and Hazard Reporting and Investigation Procedure](#)

Curtin - [HSEM Training and Induction Guidelines](#)

Curtin - HSEM Consultation and Communication Guidelines

Curtin - Emergency Management Procedures

Curtin - First Aid Guidelines

Curtin - Health and Safety Management Guidelines

Curtin - Safe Work Procedure Template

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