

H6 – Toolbox Talk Leptospirosis

Weil's disease is also known as Leptospirosis. The disease enters the body through breaks in the skin, and through the lining of the mouth and nose. It is caused by contact with water contaminated by the urine of rats and other small mammals such as mice and voles.

It begins as a mild illness which can be easily cured if treated early enough. If left untreated, it becomes more serious and can be fatal. The problem is that the initial symptoms are very similar to flu symptoms so it is possible that you could ignore them, or be treated for the wrong illness.

People who may come into contact with contaminated water are at risk of contracting Leptospirosis. Those who regularly work in or near water are particularly at risk, such as those engaged in:

- Work on sewers and other drainage systems
- Work on canals and similar conservation projects, or
- Work in tunnelling.
- Do not encourage the presence of vermin. Carefully dispose of waste food especially on sites that are wet or adjacent to rivers and lakes, etc.
- Do not handle the carcasses of dead rats or other small mammals.
- If you are at risk, cover all cuts and abrasions with a waterproof dressing and wear appropriate protective clothing.
- Always practise good hygiene by washing hands on a regular basis. This may also be extended to work clothes.
- If you frequently work near water, carry a card or tag saying that you may be at risk of catching the disease.
- Be aware that you can catch the disease if you get water in your mouth and nose after falling in.
- See your doctor immediately if you think you are infected.

If you have flu-like symptoms after falling into water that may be contaminated, then contact your doctor.

Training register

Date

Name of attendee

Signature

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