



6-minute safety talk for plumbing

Instructor Guide

Biohazards

Topic overview (why the topic is important to the students)

Plumbers can be exposed to raw sewage when working on sewage pipes or septic tank outlets, or when laying new pipe in soil. Measures should be in place to prevent direct contact with raw sewage. Health effects of exposure to sewage and soil include tetanus (caused by a toxin produced by bacteria common in soil and sewage), leptospirosis (caused by a parasitic worm), Hepatitis A, bacteria such as E. coli, and parasites such as giardia and cryptosporum.

Human pathogens from soil and raw sewage can enter the body through the nose or mouth, particularly if a person drinks contaminated water or by hand-to-mouth transmission. Exposure can also occur through open wounds or by inhaling (human pathogens in dust, for example).

Demonstration and Discussion Topics

- Discuss** the types of plumbing activities that involve potential exposure to biohazards.
- Distribute** the student handout.
- Review** the safety tips.
- Emphasize** the importance of assessing each job for biohazards before beginning.
- Discuss** the tasks involving biohazards that would require PPE.
- Discuss** the attitude that “it won’t happen to me”. Remind them that exposure can and will happen if they take shortcuts or are careless.
- Instruct** the students to identify and report any safety concerns about biohazard exposure at any time.

- Answer** any questions or concerns they might have.
- Set a good example** by working safely at all times.

Resources

- HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis B and C
http://www.worksafebc.com/publications/health_and_safety/by_topic/assets/pdf/hiv_aids.pdf
- Chemical and Biological Substances
<http://www2.worksafebc.com/Publications/OHSRegulation/Part5.asp>