



Wastewater and Ebola For Sewer and Wastewater Treatment Utilities and Professionals

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Safe handling of possibly Ebola-contaminated wastewater when serving a medical facility

The Ebola virus is rapidly destroyed by exposure to disinfectants, raw sewage, and the wastewater treatment process. Ebola in wastewater is not a greater threat than other pathogens that may be discharged from a hospital and sewer workers dealing with a hospital wastewater should always wear appropriate personal protective equipment. However, worker concerns specific to this pathogen are understandable and Ebola exposure may be a particular concern if sewer workers are working immediately downstream of a hospital discharge.

These are recommendations for employers of workers who must enter the sewer - collection system near a facility that is treating a suspected or confirmed Ebola patient.

We recommend that you:

1. Ensure all medical facilities you serve have your 24/7 call number for utility notification purposes.
2. Contact the medical facility to learn about the wastewater disposal methods they'll be using.
3. If notified of an active case, the best option is to reschedule sewer collection work in the areas downstream of the medical facility for the duration of the Ebola patient treatment period.
4. If sewer work close to the hospital is unavoidable, you may choose to direct the hospital to disinfect prior to discharge during the time your employees are working in the sewers.
5. Review your bloodborne/waterborne pathogen program with your employees and contact Washington State Department of Labor and Industries if you have questions.
6. If you need information on the patient's prior locations, contact your local health jurisdiction.
7. Share the Washington Department of Health's recommended guidance for medical professionals and clinics with your local medical community.
8. Periodically check the Department of Health Ebola webpage for updated information.