

Hospital Hygiene

All employers have a role in ensuring their working environment is as clean and hygienic as possible to prevent the spread of viruses like the Swine Flu (or H1N1) and Avian Flu epidemics or the hospital bugs like MRSA.

Nowhere is this more important than in hospitals, where in addition to the conditions mentioned above there are significant risks to both staff and patients from infections and from Legionnaires' disease. There are special requirements for health and safety in hospital laboratories. The information in this guidance covers more general building hygiene issues.

Legionnaires' disease is a potentially fatal pneumonia caused by legionella bacteria. Since legionella are widespread in the environment, they may contaminate and grow in other water systems such as cooling towers and hot and cold water services.

The HSE produces a helpful leaflet to guide facilities managers on managing the risk

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/iacl27.pdf>

General infections and hospital hygiene

Infections at work are those created by exposure to harmful micro-organisms. Micro-organisms are found virtually everywhere in the natural environment. The most common type of infection is diarrhoeal disease and most cases of infection are reported in healthcare workers. The HSE has a useful guide for employers and managers:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/infection.pdf>

Building Hygiene

Infection control comes down from ensuring that day-to-day cleaning processes are adopting best practice, to changing people's habits and regularly cleaning frequently touched surfaces.

Hand hygiene as well as keeping surfaces clean and free from germs is now regarded as a natural way to contain the spread of infection.

The day-to-day cleaning regime will help but it will not be able to address all of those hard to reach places, such as behind units or above head height.

Increasingly, facilities managers recognise the importance of a periodic deep hygiene clean to avoid areas getting out of control from an infection risk perspective. This should include, Thorough deep cleaning of awkward areas, reaching even the highest areas, and disinfection treatment throughout.

Information courtesy of



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