

## MICROBIOLOGICAL HAZARDS

FOR MOST OF US, THE OUTDOOR WORKING ENVIRONMENT WAS ONE OF THE REASONS WE CAME INTO THIS INDUSTRY.

HOWEVER, THE SOIL, WATER AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTS WE MAY COME INTO CONTACT WITH HARBOUR A HIDDEN HAZARDS THAT COULD AFFECT OUR HEALTH.

### - VIRUSES AND BACTERIA

#### GENERAL

- Good hygiene for all of us is essential - know where the welfare is for this site and use it.
- Always wash your hands before eating and smoking.
- Bacteria can enter the body through ingestion (eating/drinking), inhalation and through breaks in the skin.
- If you suffer any cuts at home or at work, get them treated and then protect them while at work.
- Don't encourage vermin. Keep your workplace, canteen and other welfare clean - always dispose of waste food and packaging properly.

#### WEIL'S DISEASE

- Weil's disease, which is also known as Leptospirosis, is a kind of jaundice.
- All operatives who may come into contact with contaminated water.
- Particularly operatives who work regularly in or near water, such as those engaged in:-
  - work on sewers and other drainage systems
  - work on canals and similar conservation projects
  - work in tunnelling
- 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 starts 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 and it is possible that you could ignore the symptoms or be treated for the wrong illness.
- If you frequently work near water, carry a card or tag saying that you may be at risk of catching the disease.
- See your doctor immediately if you think you are infected.

#### **QUESTIONS:**

- 1 *Who might be particularly at risk of Weil's disease?*
- 2 *What are the symptoms?*
- 3 *Do you have any comments regarding the welfare arrangements on this site?*

Further Information:- CIP Manual, Section 25  
IPSL Card L101