

J. Murphy and Sons Ltd – Deephams Inlet Works Upgrade Safety Alert

The following Safety Alert should be transmitted to **ALL** site staff and operatives.

LEPTOSPIROSIS

A Thames Water employee has recently contracted Leptospirosis or Weils Disease as it is more commonly know. The Injured Party is believed to have drunk from a bottle of water whilst working on site in a STW. Weils disease is a reportable disease under R.I.D.D.O.R

Hazards to Humans

Weil's disease is a serious and often fatal infection which attacks your Kidneys and Liver. In recent years 35% of people infected by Weils disease have died as a result of contracting the disease.

It is estimated that in the next 5 years this figure could increase to 45% as foxes are becoming more common around cities.

Weils disease symptoms will normally start with a feverish like illness with high temperatures and headaches and will often include vomiting, muscle pain and a lack of energy. Jaundice may be present but does not occur in the early stages.

Treatment is effective during the initial stages of the disease – normally within the first 5 days and any person suffering from or suspected to be suffering from the disease must seek medical help within this period. Failure to do so could be fatal or may result in meningitis, pneumonia, kidney or liver failure.

Transmission

Weils disease may occur in any situation where there is contact with urine from rats, cow's sheep and foxes. In the main it is caught through contact with rats urine as they are incontinent and very mobile. It may enter the body through abrasions or cuts in the skin and through the lining of your nose and mouth. The organisms can survive for a considerable period of time outside of the host, and can last up to 6 months in damp conditions.

Construction workers and farm labourers are those most at risk from Weils Disease and in particular those who work in Sewage Treatment Plants.

Control to exposure

In order to limit the risk of contracting the disease the following must be adhered to ***at all times:***

1. Wash your hand regularly and dry on disposable towels not down cloths as cloths maybe contaminated and use alcohol wipe which are provided.
2. Do not handle rats, dead or alive, without adequate PPE.
3. Avoid all hand to mouth contact.
4. Eat, drink and smoke only in designated areas, after washing your hands correctly.
5. All staff should be informed of dangers of Weils.
6. All personnel working at Deephams shall wear full PPE at all times - as a minimum this shall be Hard Hat, Hi Visibility Vest, Safety Boots and Gloves, failure to follow these rules will result in removal from site.

If any further information is required please contact Joe Wall or a member of site management for assistance.