

HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Leptospirosis Information Sheet

1. Zoonoses

Zoonoses (diseases passed from animals to humans) are a known risk associated with trapping activities and handling of animal carcasses. You must consider the risk from zoonoses in your branch's activities and, if the risk exists for your branch, ensure that zoonoses are included in the relevant risk assessment(s). You must also inform your volunteers of the risk and how to protect themselves from it.

The best defences against infection by from zoonoses are PPE and good hand hygiene. Wear nitrile gloves when handling traps and animal carcasses. If you wear protective (puncture-proof or cut-proof) gloves when setting traps or handling carcasses, wear a pair of nitriles under these and don't use the protective gloves for other tasks, to avoid cross-contamination. Wash your hands (soap and water is best, but hand sanitiser works too) before touching your face, eating or drinking (or smoking/vaping). Dispose of used nitrile gloves correctly so that they don't become a risk to other people.

2. Leptospirosis

Leptospirosis is a zoonoses caused by the *Leptospira* bacteria and is spread to humans through contact with animal urine (or surfaces that have been contaminated with urine). Leptospirosis can be spread by a number of pest animal species including mice, rats, possums and hedgehogs.

Common symptoms of Leptospirosis are flu-like, including:

- Fever and chills
- Headaches and lethargy
- Muscle aches
- Red eyes
- Nausea and vomiting.

Symptoms can appear within 1 to 4 weeks after infection and can last days or weeks. Severe cases can result in Weil's Disease which can affect the liver and kidneys. See your doctor if you believe you may have contracted Leptospirosis.

Cases of Leptosporosis must be notified to WorkSafe, so please let us know through the H&S reporting system if somebody at your branch catches Leptospirosis in the course of F&B activities.

Leptosporosis infection can be prevented by the PPE and hand hygiene controls described above. Make sure that any cuts, grazes and cracks in the skin are covered if there is a risk of exposure. When traps are brought in for maintenance or repair, spray or wipe them down with an antibacterial (such as disinfectant or a bleach solution) to remove any urine that might be present (but take care not to leave an odour that may repel target species).