

Hantavirus Exposure Control Plan (ECP) Entry into a construction site where contaminated rodent saliva, urine and droppings have been found

NOTE: City of Victoria employees entering building for inspection or regulatory purpose(s) are entering a site for which either:

- The owner must provide and maintain the owner's land and premises that are being used as a workplace in a manner that ensures the health and safety of persons at or near the workplace, or
- The prime contractor on a multiple-employer workplace must (a) ensure that the activities of employers, workers and other persons at the workplace relating to occupational health and safety are coordinated, and (b) do everything that is reasonably practicable to establish and maintain a system or process that will ensure compliance with the Workers Compensation Act and OHS Regulation.

Work procedures established by the owner, prime contractor or contractor for working with and around rodent saliva, urine and droppings should protect City of Victoria workers and all other workers on site. This ECP has been developed to provide additional protection if these work procedures are either insufficient or not followed.

Hantaviruses are a group of viruses that are carried by many different kinds of wild rodents (mainly wild rats and mice). To date, only deer mice have been systematically tested and found to carry the Hantavirus in BC.

The purpose of this ECP is to prevent harmful exposure of workers to Hantavirus.

Health Hazards of hantavirus

The disease caused by Hantaviruses is Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS). This syndrome begins as a flu-like illness. In the early stages, a worker may experience fever, sore muscles, headaches, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain and shortness of breath. Usually, people do not get a sore throat, runny nose or a rash. As the disease progresses, fluid builds up in the lungs, making it difficult to breathe. Severe respiratory failure can occur within a few days of the early-stage symptoms. Symptoms may appear from 5 to 45 days after exposure to the virus. HPS is a rare disease, but it has been reported in parts of Canada.

Purpose and responsibilities:

The City of Victoria has a duty to protect our workers from exposure to Hantavirus.

A combination of control measures will be required to achieve this objective. We commit to being diligent in our efforts to select the most effective control technologies available, and to ensure that the best practices, as described in this ECP, are followed at our worksites.

The employer is responsible for the following:

- Inform and instruct workers on how to eliminated or reduce the risk of contact with rodent saliva, urine or droppings.
- Ensure that work practices eliminate or minimize the risk of unforeseen contact.
- Provide workers with the equipment, tools and personal protective equipment (PPE) needed to deal with an unexpected contact
- Monitor the workplace to ensure that safeguards are used and safe work practices are followed
- In case of a potential or suspected exposure, ensure that employees are aware of procedures for reporting incidents of exposure to the employer.
- **Work with the owner or qualified coordinator (as appointed by the Prime Contractor, if one has been designated) to ensure the coordination of health and safety activities for the worksite.**

Supervisors are responsible for the following:

- Providing adequate instruction to workers on the hazards of Hantavirus.
- Selecting and implementing the appropriate control measures.
- Ensuring that workers using respirators have been properly trained and fit-tested, and that the results are recorded.
- Ensuring that work is conducted in a manner that minimizes and adequately controls the risk to workers and others. This includes ensuring that workers use appropriate controls and wear the necessary PPE.

Workers are responsible for the following:

- Helping to reduce the risk of contact with rodent saliva, urine and droppings.
- Attending education and training sessions provided by the employer.
- Using controls and following established safe job procedures
- Using the available tools and PPE that have been provided for use in the chance encounters with rodent saliva, urine and droppings.
- Knowing how to report exposure incidents.
- Knowing that they should not clean up dust or other materials that might be contaminated with rodent urine or droppings, unless they have the proper cleaning materials and PPE and have been trained to do so safely.

Hazard identification and risk assessment

Potential routes of transmission by which the virus can infect a worker include contact with contaminated rodent saliva, urine and droppings. Person-to-person transmission hasn't been reported in BC.

As the City of Victoria is an urban center, the presence of deer mice is less likely than in rural workplaces; therefore the risk of exposure is less.

Acceptable control methods for working on a site where contaminated rodent saliva, urine and droppings have been found

- The work methods that appear in the table below are acceptable, provided that the respirator selection and other controls are adhered to.
- The control options below will be used to eliminate or reduce the risk to workers from the hazards of exposure to rodent saliva, urine, and droppings.

Work Activity	Dust Suppression	Other Controls	Personal Protective Equipment
Working on a site where contaminated rodent saliva, urine and droppings have been found	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request a copy of the building's pre-renovation or pre-demolition hazardous materials survey report • Review the report to determine if rodent saliva, urine, and droppings were found • If the report found rodent saliva, urine and droppings or if a hazardous materials survey report is not available to the worker, the worker must wear the same protective equipment and clothing that would be required for workers conducting clean-up (refer to WorkSafeBC BK74). • If during their work, the presence of rodents or rodent contamination is confirmed as present, a decontamination procedure should be followed. 	<p>Based on survey report and information provided by owner/Prime Contractor, either:</p> <p>Enter site without PPE,</p> <p>Enter site donning PPE,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half-face respirator with P100 series (HEPA) filters • Optional Disposable coveralls (e.g., Tyvek type) <p>Refuse to enter the site</p>

Decontamination

- Leaving respiratory and eye protection in place, move away from the contaminated work area to a location where there are no other workers.
- Remove coveralls at the perimeter of the work area, and place them in a disposal bag. Collapse the bag, and temporarily seal it.
- Wet wipe exposed reusable respirator surfaces, eyewear and rubber footwear with a disinfectant solution.
- Rinse the outside of gloves in the disinfectant solution. Remove the gloves and place them in a plastic bag for disposal
- Place disposable respirators in a plastic bag. Permanently seal the bag. Label the bag. For reusable respirators, tape shut the inlet opening of the respirator cartridge to prevent the release of dusts or discard the cartridges. Clean and disinfect the respirator body.
- Remove eyewear. Clean and disinfect it before storing it, or discard it.
- Wash exposed skin surfaces thoroughly with soap and water.

Respiratory protective equipment

- Each worker will be fit-tested if a respirator is required.
- If a worker is required to wear a respirator that requires an effective seal with the face for proper functioning, the worker must be clean-shaven where the respirator seals with the face.
- When the worker notices a notable resistance to breathing, the respirator filters must be replaced.
- Respirators will be used, cleaned, and stored in accordance with the respiratory protection program.

Annual review

- This ECP will be reviewed at least annually and updated as necessary by the employer, in consultation with the joint health and safety committee.