Bird and Bat Waste Exposure Prevention

OVERVIEW
Several diseases are caused by fungi and bacteria present in bird and bat droppings. The department utilizing and controlling an area is ultimately responsible for all required cleanup and bird/bat control measures (see Responsibility and Definitions).

Exposure
Humans may be infected by inhalation of fungi- or bacteria-contaminated dust or close contact with contaminated material. Therefore, individuals who work in, or clean up, areas contaminated with bird or bat droppings may become exposed when the material is disturbed or dust is created.

Risk of Infection

Birds
Although cryptococcosis, histoplasmosis, and psittacosis infections are rare, they can occur. Individuals who are young, elderly, or immune-compromised are most at risk. These infectious agents pose no significant health risk to WSU employees provided simple precautions are followed.

Bats
Rabies can be prevalent in bats and exposure is a concern. Contact the campus Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) department before entering areas where bats are present. (See Campus EH&S Contacts.)

Responsibility

Department
The department assigned the space is responsible for cleanup and control before maintenance personnel enter the area.

Maintenance personnel entering an area where a large amount of droppings are present are not required to cleanup or perform infection control unless they utilize the area.

Pullman campus departments may use the blanket contract with the University’s cleanup contractor. Refer to Whitman County Contract for more information.

Non-Pullman campus departments have the option of hiring a local area cleanup contractor in conformance with University purchased services contracting procedures. See BPPM 70.50 and contact the campus EH&S or Purchasing Services for more information.
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WSU Everett and WSU Tri-Cities

WSU Everett and WSU Tri-Cities departments must contact the campus public safety office regarding birds and bats in buildings. The campus public safety office contacts campus facilities and other applicable departments to assist with removal.

EH&S

Contact the applicable campus EH&S department to request:

- Area inspections if large quantities of droppings are present.
- Exposure prevention training for WSU employees.
- Further information.

Campus EH&S Contacts

The following contacts apply to EH&S services at applicable WSU locations:

- WSU Pullman EH&S; telephone 509-335-3041
- WSU Spokane EH&S; telephone 509-368-6699
- WSU Tri-Cities EH&S; telephone 509-372-7163
- WSU Vancouver EH&S; telephone 360-546-9706

Departments at WSU locations not listed above may contact WSU Pullman EH&S for assistance.

Further information is available from the EH&S website at:

ehs.wsu.edu/

DEFINITIONS

The diseases associated with fungi and bacteria present in bird and bat droppings include cryptococcosis, histoplasmosis, and psittacosis.

Cryptococcosis

Cryptococcosis is a disease caused by a fungus that naturally occurs in the soil and grows in bird and bat droppings.

Cryptococcosis symptoms include meningitis, severe headache, mental disturbances, fever, blurred vision, and cough. This disease is most common in individuals with compromised immune systems.

Histoplasmosis

Histoplasmosis is a disease caused by a fungus that naturally occurs in the soil and grows in bird and bat droppings.
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**Histoplasmosis (cont.)**
Most individuals who acquire histoplasmosis have no symptoms. Symptoms that do occur will vary, depending on the form of the disease. Acute histoplasmosis is characterized by respiratory symptoms, general malaise, fever, chest pains, and a dry non-productive cough. The chronic form of histoplasmosis infection resembles chronic pulmonary tuberculosis and progresses over months or years.

**Psittacosis**
Psittacosis is a disease caused by a bacteria that is found in bird droppings and other secretions (often carried by pet birds).

Symptoms of psittacosis infection may include a low-grade fever that often becomes worse as the disease progresses, including anorexia, sore throat, light sensitivity, and a severe headache.

**PROCEDURES**
To prevent exposure to the organisms that cause cryptococcosis, histoplasmosis, and psittacosis, follow the procedures below.

**Precautions**
When bird or bat droppings are present, *do not* sweep, vacuum, or disturb droppings. If possible, avoid the area entirely.

**Cleaning**
Use wet cleaning methods only. Follow the steps below.

Small Amount of Droppings
If there is a small amount of bird or bat droppings in a localized area, use the following method for cleaning and disposal.

*Use Protective Gloves*
Wear nonabsorbent protective gloves, such as nitrile or vinyl. Nonlatex gloves are preferred due to the increasing prevalence of latex sensitivities.

*Disinfect Before Disposal*
Mix a disinfectant solution of one part bleach to ten parts water. NOTE: The WSU Vancouver custodial group does not use chlorine bleach. Contact the applicable campus EH&S for information on other acceptable disinfectants. See [Campus EH&S Contacts](#).

Thoroughly soak or spray the bird or bat droppings with the disinfectant using a spray bottle or a clean pesticide application sprayer.

After the droppings are wetted, wipe up the droppings using a mop, sponge, or rag that has also been soaked in the disinfectant.
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**Disposal**
Place contaminated waste material and gloves into a plastic bag and seal.
Dispose of the bag in the regular trash.

**After Cleaning**
Wash mop, sponge, or rag in the disinfectant solution and rinse.
Wash hands with soap and hot water, even after wearing gloves.

**Large Quantity of Droppings**
If there is a large quantity of droppings in a large area, use the following method for cleaning and disposal.

**Contact EH&S**
Contact the campus EH&S department to inspect the area and recommend proper cleanup and bird/bat control procedures. See Campus EH&S Contacts.

**Use Personal Protective Equipment**
Wear the following personal protective equipment while cleaning:

- NIOSH-approved respirator with HEPA filter cartridges
- Nonabsorbent protective gloves, such as nitrile or vinyl (nonlatex glove are preferred due to the increasing prevalence of latex sensitivities)
- Eye protection
- Disposable coveralls
- Shoe coverings or launderable clothing with rubber boots

Fit-testing and training is required before using respirator (see SPPM 2.62). Contact the campus EH&S department to schedule fit-testing and training. See Campus EH&S Contacts.

**Disinfect Before Disposal**
Mix a disinfectant solution of one part bleach to ten parts water.
NOTE: The WSU Vancouver custodial group does not use chlorine bleach. Contact the campus EH&S for information on other acceptable disinfectants.
Thoroughly soak or spray the bird or bat droppings with the disinfectant using a spray bottle or a clean pesticide application sprayer.
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Disinfect (cont.) After the droppings are wetted, wipe up the droppings using a mop, sponge, or rag that has also been soaked in the disinfectant.

Disposal Place contaminated waste material and gloves into a plastic bag and seal.

Dispose of the bag in the regular trash.

After Cleaning Wash mop, sponge, or rag in the disinfectant solution and rinse.

Disinfect rubber boots and shoe coverings. Remove gloves and wash hands and/or shower with soap and hot water.

Launder clothes worn while cleaning in a separate load.

Bird and Bat Control Measures After cleanup, prevent birds and bats from reentering the area.

Plug, screen, or cover all openings 1/4 inch or greater into areas.

If birds or bats are roosting in open areas, use "spike" wire, "spiders," or other acceptable devices to prevent them from landing in the work area. See the campus EH&S for more information about open area control devices.

NOTE: Avoid any measures that might unnecessarily harm or kill birds or bats.

See SPPM 6.30 for more information or contact the campus EH&S. (See Campus EH&S Contacts.)

WHITMAN COUNTY CONTRACTS A WSU Pullman department experiencing a bird or bat dropping problem may purchase services from the University's pest control and/or cleanup contractor. Contact EH&S or Purchasing for the names and telephone numbers of the contractors.

Paying for Services The department is responsible for paying for all contractor pest control, inspection and cleanup charges related to work conducted in the departmental space.

A departmental official with expenditure authority signs the supplier’s invoice and enters the applicable supporting WSU cost center worktags.

The department routes the invoice to Accounts Payable for payment.