

# Biological Hazards in Sewage and Wastewater Treatment Plants



## Protecting the Worker

For work around sewage or wastewater, engineering controls and work practices are the best ways to protect workers from exposures to disease. When engineering controls are not possible, use personal protective equipment (PPE). For some jobs and around some hazards, respiratory protection is required.

### **OSHA says the employer should give the worker:**

- Training and education about the hazards of wastewater and sewage
- A place onsite with clean water for washing your hands
- A place to wash and clean up after work
- The right PPE, such as gloves, goggles, a face shield, water-resistant suit, or respirator – depending on the job
- Clean areas set aside for eating and smoking
- Cleaning facilities or services for clothing and equipment. (If clothing is badly soiled, change out of it. Keep equipment clean to limit your exposures to the disease-causing agents.)

### **What you can do:**

- Most important: **Wash your hands well with clean water and soap before you eat or smoke and after work.**
- **Do not touch your nose, mouth, eyes, or ears with your hands, unless you have just washed. Most of the time, people get these diseases when they have germs on their hands and they touch their mouth or nose or eyes.**
- Keep your fingernails short; use a stiff soapy brush to clean under your nails.
- Wear waterproof gloves when you clean pumps or