Biohazards for Housekeepers / Maintenance Stats and Facts

FACTS

Housekeepers and maintenance staff in hotels are potentially exposed to various biohazards that can pose significant health risks. Here are some of the primary biohazard risks for these workers:

1. **Bloodborne Pathogens:** Employees are at risk of exposure to bloodborne pathogens like HIV, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C through contact with blood or bodily fluids. This exposure can occur through needlestick injuries, handling linens, or cleaning rooms.
2. **Used Needles and Sharps:** Improperly disposed of needles and sharps can lead to puncture wounds, exposing staff to infectious diseases.
3. **Bodily Fluids:** Cleaning up bodily fluids without proper protective gear can expose housekeeping staff to various pathogens.
4. **Contaminated Linens and Towels:** Handling soiled linens and towels can expose staff to microorganisms that may cause illness.
5. **Cleaning Chemicals:** While not a biohazard, the improper use or accidental mixing of cleaning chemicals can release hazardous fumes or residues that can be harmful if touched or inhaled.
6. **Mold and Bacteria:** Maintenance and housekeeping staff may encounter mold or bacteria in damp areas, air conditioning units, or during cleanup of organic waste, posing respiratory and infection risks.
7. **Pest Control:** Handling pests or pest-contaminated materials can expose staff to diseases carried by rodents, insects, or other pests.

STATS

- Housekeeping work, whether in a hotel or hospital, can be dangerous work. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, of 800 private industry occupations, housekeeping staff are invariably in the top 10 when it comes to work-related injuries involving days away from work.
- The observations were as follows: (1) participating workers: 94.3%; (2) incomplete hepatitis B vaccination: 1 in 3; and (3) accident rate: 26.5%, mostly involving hypodermic needles and blood from an unknown source; roughly half occurred during waste management.
- We estimate that in 2022, 550,819 deaths were caused by biological risk factors, with 476,000 deaths attributed to communicable infectious diseases and 74,000 deaths caused by noncommunicable factors. Among these, there were 223,650 deaths attributed to COVID-19 at work.