

# HAZARD ALERT

CPWR  
THE CENTER FOR CONSTRUCTION  
RESEARCH AND TRAINING

# AVOIDING HAZARDS DURING HEALTHCARE CONSTRUCTION



## Construction Workers

If you do construction, renovation or maintenance work at a hospital, nursing home, doctor's office, or other healthcare facility you may come in contact with:

- ▶ Germs
- ▶ Mold
- ▶ Radiation

These hazards can make you sick.

## Patients' Risks

### You aren't the only one at risk!

The dust, mold, or germs stirred up during construction work can make patients sick or worse. According to the Centers for Disease Control, 75,000 patients died from infections they got while in a healthcare facility in 2011.\*

To protect patients, hospitals and other healthcare facilities should perform an Infection Control Risk Assessment (or ICRA) before construction work begins. The ICRA helps construction employers know what steps should be taken to isolate the construction area from the rest of the healthcare facility to keep patients safe.

## Get Trained

### Ask your employer or union for training.



Worker establishing a containment area during an ICRA training class.

CPWR and NABTU, for example, have designed an 8-hour ICRA Awareness Training Program for construction workers.

The NABTU program teaches workers how infections spread,

how to establish a containment area and work without disrupting patient care, and much more.

To receive copies of this Hazard Alert and cards on other topics call **301-578-8500** or visit **www.cpwr.com**

## Protect yourself ...

### 1 Germs

Sick patients leave germs behind on hospital equipment and supplies such as used needles and scalpels.

#### To protect yourself:

- ▶ **AVOID** contact with gurneys, laundry, wheel-chairs, beds, and "sharp" objects such as needles.
- ▶ **WASH** your hands regularly with hot water and soap.
- ▶ **MAKE SURE** your vaccinations are up to date.



Worker wearing protective gear when removing mold.

### 2 Mold

You may find mold around sinks and drains, behind drywall, or above ceiling tiles. Breathing in mold spores can cause allergic reactions. Some molds can even cause serious lung infections.

#### If you find mold in your work area, report it to your supervisor.

Employers must provide workers who come into contact with mold with personal protective equipment (PPE) including gloves, coveralls, and respirators.

### 3 Radiation

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) and X-Ray machines are common in healthcare facilities. The radiation used by these machines is not dangerous when controlled by medical staff, but too much can hurt you.

#### Be aware of your surroundings.

If one of these machines is located near the work area, check with your supervisor to make sure the area where you will be working is safe.

## To learn more...

- ▶ Contact your union for more information about NABTU's ICRA Awareness Training Program.
- ▶ Visit our training website at <http://bit.ly/CPWRICRA>
- ▶ Learn about preventing HAs at <http://bit.ly/HAlprevention>

**If you think you are in danger:**

**Contact your supervisor.  
Contact your union.**

**Call OSHA  
1-800-321-OSHA**