

Bird Droppings



Bird droppings

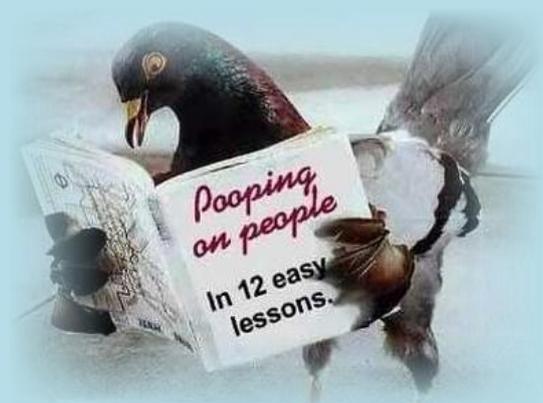
Bird droppings, left behind by large numbers of roosting birds, are likely to be found by employees during:

- Construction work
- Maintenance work
- work in roof spaces
- Demolition work.

The most serious risks are from organisms that grow in the droppings, feathers and nesting debris on ledges and in lofts. External parasites may also become a problem when infested birds leave their roosts and nests. The parasites they leave behind can invade buildings and bite or irritate people's skin.

Some of the diseases that can be caused by the organisms in bird droppings are:

- **Bacterial** - e-coli, salmonella, listeriosis, campylobacter, psittacosis
- **Fungal** - histoplasmosis, cryptococcosis, candidiasis
- **Viral** - meningitis, Newcastle disease
- **Parasitic / protozoal** – toxoplasmosis, trichomoniasis.



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The bacteria and parasites found in bird droppings can be

- Breathed
- Ingested by eating
- From eating with dirty hands.



Infection is most likely, however, when dust containing massive amounts of the bacteria or parasites is inhaled.

The risk of disease is greatly increased for people with weakened resistance which called result from things like:

- Antibiotic therapy
- Skin damage via injury or surgery
- Chronic disease.



Precautions

Seal off windows, doors and ventilation inlets.

Dampen bird droppings with a gentle spray until wet enough to prevent dust becoming airborne. This may take several hours or more of repeated spraying to penetrate the droppings completely. (Strong jets of water may cause dust to become airborne and runoff may contaminate public areas.)

Wear a high efficiency (HEPA) dust respirator, disposable gloves and overalls. On completion of the job treat the disposable gloves and overalls and respirator filters as contaminated waste and add to the droppings for disposal. Double bag the droppings and disposables in 3 mil plastic bags. Dispose in a landfill.

Non-disposable work clothing and respirators should be removed and sealed in a plastic bag. Disinfect in the bag before final cleaning and reuse. Shower after scrubbing boots.

Employers - select workers with high immune status. Medical assistance may be needed to obtain a medical history – with attention to current diseases such as cancer, prolonged oral steroid therapy, pulmonary disease, diabetes mellitus and other conditions. (Get the employee's permission first.)

Avoid using chemicals. Chemical sterilisation of droppings before removal has **NOT** proven to be effective against all organisms (and may present another health hazard from chemical exposures).