



PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT  
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH DIVISION



# SAFETY BULLETIN

Issued February 2019

## Reports of Flea-Borne Typhus

Recent media reports of rodent sightings and instances of flea bites in and around City Hall have implied a connection with a typhus outbreak in Los Angeles last fall. That typhus outbreak (which was limited to fewer than a dozen cases) is unrelated to the recent issue of rodents – an issue that the City is taking comprehensive steps to address through inspections of buildings and aggressive clean-up efforts in and around City Hall.

Nevertheless, in the event of any rodent sightings or flea bites, employees should:

1. Report the incident to a supervisor without delay; and
2. Seek medical attention if symptoms develop.

Supervisors should alert their department's facilities management staff or General Services as appropriate about the incident.

People can become ill with flea-borne Typhus when infected flea feces (excrement) comes into contact with cuts or scrapes in the skin or is rubbed into the eyes by unwashed hands, or when spores from dried feces are inhaled. Typhus cannot be spread from person to person.

Typhus manifests through flu-like symptoms that appear up to two weeks after contact. Employees who suffer such symptoms but test negative for flu should discuss with their medical provider the possibility of typhus as a differential diagnosis. Typhus is easily treatable with antibiotics.

Employees can take steps to prevent rodent or flea infestation by:

1. Leaving no food exposed. Food should be stored in glass or tin containers with sealed lids.
2. Discarding food debris properly and emptying trash receptacles nightly.
3. Limiting the number of live potted plants which can attract rodents.

For additional information, visit the following links or contact the Occupational Safety and Health Division at 213-473-7097.

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/phcommon/public/media/mediapubhpdetail.cfm?prid=1987>

(County Department of Public Health News Release, February 7, 2019)

<http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/hea/library/topics/typhus/CDCP-ACDC-0067-01%20.pdf>

(Frequently Asked Questions)

Please share this information with all affected managers and supervisors to ensure compliance. If you have any questions regarding this bulletin, please contact the Personnel Department, Occupational Safety and Health Division at (213) 473-7097. This bulletin can also be downloaded at: [http://per.ci.la.ca.us/Safety/Safety\\_Bulletins.htm](http://per.ci.la.ca.us/Safety/Safety_Bulletins.htm)