

## **How to Avoid a Biohazard Nightmare at Your Building** **by Michael Nicholson**

What is a Biohazard? 'Bio' refers to life and hazard means potentially dangerous. Combine the two and you have the possibility of a dangerous situation, in which, communicable diseases may be transmitted. In order to protect ourselves from susceptibility to lawsuits, we must follow the California State Health and Safety Code and OSHA regulations when faced with a biohazard on our property.

When a death occurs at your building it must be dealt with properly. Maintenance crews that are not trained in blood-borne pathogens may not cleanup blood or body fluids according to OSHA regulations. Anyone involved in trauma scene waste disposal must be registered with the California Department of Health Services. Throwing the waste into the dumpster is not acceptable. Suppose a neighborhood kid or transient is rummaging through contaminated material in your dumpster and is infected with hepatitis or the AIDS virus? Good luck in court and have fun sleeping at night.

What about your tenants and their families? Would you want them to re-inhabit a unit that was not properly disinfected? Liability issues that involve tenant's health and safety can be devastating.

Another messy and potentially hazardous cleanup is that of a pack rat.

The pack rat is a compulsive collector, and believe it or not, it is not that uncommon. After a move out of a tenant or a death, the apartment owner enters the unit and the discovery is made. In the apartment resides many years' worth of waste from old newspapers, garbage, pet feces and even human waste. Every inch of the apartment is contaminated and the cleanup is long, arduous and potentially hazardous to the health of the maintenance crew.

Last, but not least, we have the 'belatedly discovered' death. Also known as decomposition or 'decomp'. These cases generally cause the most property damage. Although there are many variables involved, usually the larger the decedent and the longer they are 'undiscovered', the more damage that is done. As time passes, fluids seep into flooring and wick up into walls. Decompositions are also the most offensive due to the very strong and aggressive odor. The odor in turn attracts insects, which helps to spread the contamination further.

There are, however, certain procedures that you can follow to insure the proper disinfection of your unit and disposal of bio-hazardous waste.

If you encounter a crime scene, accidental death, decomposition or any other major waste problem on your property, contact a licensed trauma scene management company. If there are large amounts of blood or body fluids at an accident or death scene, the state now requires that a 'registered trauma scene waste management practitioner' handle the cleanup.

*The above article was written by Michael Nicholson of Clean Scene Services. Clean Scene Services is a Trauma Scene Management company. Mike has personally supervised countless blood, fluid and waste cleanups. For more information feel free to contact him at 877-246-4292 or visit him on the web at [www.cleansceneservices.com](http://www.cleansceneservices.com) .*