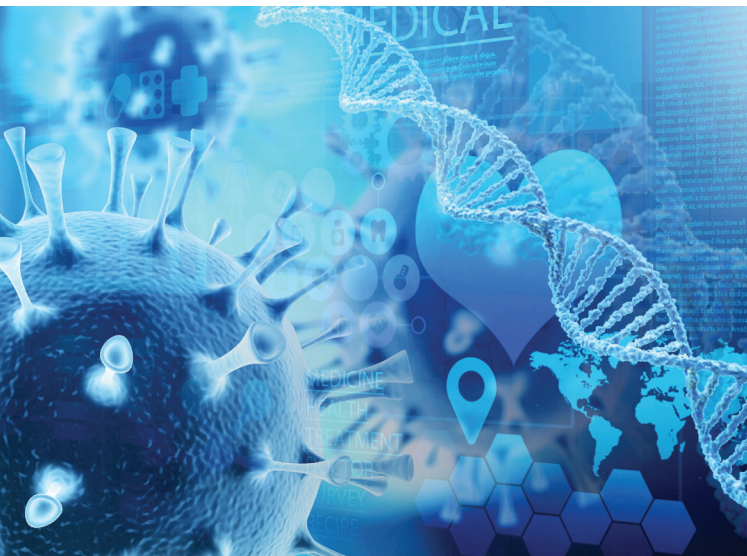


HEALTH RISKS

Risks of exposure to biological contaminants include:

- unpleasant sensory experience (e.g. foul smell) can cause dizziness and fainting;
- immunological reactions (e.g. asthma, hives, anaphylactic shock);
- gastrointestinal reactions (e.g. nausea, vomiting, pain, diarrhea);
- systemic infections (e.g. HIV, tuberculosis).



Recommendations:

- Always wear appropriate personal protective equipment*.
- In case of exposure (e.g. accidental cut), report the incident and seek prophylactic treatment – ask your doctor!
- To prevent infectious diseases, follow the appropriate immunization schedule for age and occupation (e.g. hepatitis B, tuberculosis, tetanus, etc.).

**Not wearing protective equipment at work is violation of paragraph 1, article 21 of Law 04/L-161 on Occupational Security and Health.*

**Protect yourself today -
don't leave it for tomorrow!**

**Protect others -
others are your colleagues, family,
friends and loved ones, too!**

**Protect the evidence -
help ensure the delivery of justice!**

Get vaccinated!

PROTECT YOURSELF TO PROTECT THE EVIDENCE

Improving working procedures
to prevent biological contamination
and cross contamination of evidence

An initiative by the:
INSTITUTE OF FORENSIC MEDICINE



 **+38 (0)38 200 18 555**

 **info@mjekesialigjore-ks.com**

Supported by:
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WHAT IS BIOLOGICAL CONTAMINATION?

Biological contamination is the exposure to biological contaminants present in the environment, the human body or human remains, or associated objects or surfaces.

Biological contaminants pose a health hazard and can include:

- bacteria, viruses, fungi/mold, parasites, insects or any type of living organism or agents derived from these.

Contamination can occur through **direct contact** of the hands or other parts of the body with contaminants, or through **breathing** of airborne particles.



HOW TO PREVENT YOUR CONTAMINATION?

- Do not touch evidence or contaminated surfaces/objects without gloves.
- Do not touch your face, clothing or mobile phone with contaminated gloves.
- Do not walk around the scene where there are human or animal body fluids without dedicated protective footwear or disposable covers.
- Wear a mask to protect your nose and mouth, especially when there is a dead, decaying body or evidence that needs to be analyzed for DNA.
- It is highly recommended for everyone going into a scene to wear disposable suits for protection!

BIOLOGICAL CONTAMINATION AND CROSS CONTAMINATION CAN HAPPEN AT A CRIME SCENE, WHEN ATTENDING TO A VICTIM, CONDUCTING AN EXHUMATION OR WORKING IN THE AUTOPSY ROOM.

POLICE OFFICERS, CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATORS, FORENSIC EXPERTS, MORGUE ASSISTANTS AND OTHER PERSONNEL FACE HEALTH RISKS DUE TO BIOLOGICAL CONTAMINATION.

THEY ALSO RISK THE LOSS OF EVIDENCE INTEGRITY DUE TO CROSS CONTAMINATION.



WHAT IS CROSS CONTAMINATION?

The transfer of biological material between two or more body parts, surfaces or objects.

Cross contamination can compromise the integrity of biological evidence (e.g. hair, blood, semen), which is a fundamental component of the criminal investigation process. This can occur during:

- the handling, transport and examination of the victim, dead body or human remains;
- the collection, packaging and analysis of biological evidence;
- the disposal of hazardous waste.



HOW TO PREVENT CROSS CONTAMINATION?

- Wear gloves and change them regularly.
- Avoid talking, sneezing, and coughing over evidence.
- Protective equipment must be removed within the scene's cordoned off area.
- Protective equipment must be considered contaminated and must not be thrown on the ground or into open environment.
- Always dispose of protective equipment in a plastic bag and, if possible, take it to a hazardous waste collection point.
- Further circulation from the scene with the same clothing spreads contamination everywhere – for example in the car, local bar/restaurant, home.