



Factsheet: Cleaning and Sanitizing with Bleach After an Emergency

Cleaning and sanitizing your household after an emergency is important to help prevent the spread of illness and disease.

Using Cleaning & Sanitizing Products

First, wash surfaces with soap and warm, clean water to remove dirt and debris. Next, sanitize surfaces with household bleach.

It is critical to read and follow the safety instructions on any product you use. Below are the most important safety guidelines when using sanitizing products:

- **Never** mix bleach with ammonia or any other cleaner.
- Wear rubber or other non-porous boots, gloves, and eye protection.
- Try not to breathe in product fumes. If using products indoors, open windows and doors to allow fresh air to enter.

Cleaning & Sanitizing with Bleach

Use regular unscented 5%—6% household bleach and follow the instructions in the charts below.

Recommendations for Cleaning and Sanitizing Food Cans and Surfaces			
Area or Item to be Cleaned	Amount of Bleach and Water to Mix		Cleaning Steps
	Bleach Amount	Water Amount	
Food surfaces that may have touched flood water. Examples: Countertops, plates. Note: Throw away wooden cutting boards, baby bottle nipples, and pacifiers.	1 teaspoon (4.9 mL)	1 gallon (3.8 L)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wash with soap and warm, clean water. 2. Rinse with clean water. 3. Sanitize using a mixture of 1 teaspoon (4.9 mL) of bleach per 1 gallon of clean water. 4. Allow to air dry.
Food cans that are not bulging, open, or damaged	1 cup (240 mL)	5 gallons (18.9 L)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remove can labels. 2. Wash cans with soap and warm, clean water. 3. Dip cans in mixture of 1 cup (240 mL) of bleach per 5 gallons of water. 4. Allow to air dry. 5. Re-label cans with a permanent marker.

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Recommendations for Cleaning and Sanitizing Household Surfaces and Items			
Area or Item to be Cleaned	Amount of Bleach and Water to Mix		Cleaning Steps
	Bleach Amount	Water Amount	
Surfaces that do not soak up water and that may have touched floodwater. Examples: Floors, stoves, sinks, certain toys, countertops, flatware, plates, and tools.	1 cup (240 mL)	5 gallons (18.9 L)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Clean surface with soap and warm, clean water.2. Rinse with clean water.3. Sanitize using a mixture of 1 cup (240 mL) of bleach to 5 gallons of water.4. Allow to air dry.

Recommendations to Clean Mold Growth Off Hard Surfaces			
Area or Item to be Cleaned	Amount of Bleach and Water to Mix		Cleaning Steps
	Bleach Amount	Water Amount	
Mold growth on hard surfaces. Examples: Floors, stoves, sinks, certain toys, countertops, flatware, plates, and tools.	1 cup (240 mL)	1 gallon (3.8 L)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Mix 1 cup (240 mL) of bleach in 1 gallon of water.2. Wash surfaces with the bleach mixture.3. If surfaces are rough, scrub them with a stiff brush.4. Rinse surfaces with clean water.5. Allow to air dry.

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