



Cleaning and Sanitizing With Bleach after an Emergency

Safety Tips

Use regular unscented 5.25% household bleach. Read and follow the safety instructions on the bleach container's label. Never mix bleach with ammonia or any other cleaner. Wear rubber boots, rubber gloves, and eye protection. Try not to breathe bleach fumes. Open windows and doors to get fresh air.

Cleaning Recommendations

The amount of bleach to mix with water depends on what you are cleaning or sanitizing. The following chart describes some items or surfaces that should and can be cleaned, the amount of bleach to mix with water, and cleaning steps for specific purposes.

Area or Item to be Cleaned	Amount of Bleach and Water to Mix		Cleaning Steps
	Bleach Amount	Water Amount	
Sanitize Drinking Water			
Clear drinking water	1/8 teaspoon (~0.75 mL)	1 gallon	1. Mix 1/8 teaspoon (~0.75 mL) bleach per 1 gallon water. 2. Add it to water. 3. Let it stand for about 30 minutes before using it. For more information see: http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/food_water.asp
Cloudy drinking water	1/4 teaspoon (~1.5 mL)	1 gallon	1. Mix 1/4 teaspoon (~1.5 mL) bleach per 1 gallon water. 2. Add it to water. 3. Let it stand for about 30 minutes before using it. For more information see: http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/food_water.asp

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Area or Item to be Cleaned	Amount of Bleach and Water to Mix		Cleaning Steps
	Bleach Amount	Water Amount	
Water storage containers (Examples: used cans or bottles)	1 teaspoon (4.9 mL)	1 cup (240 mL)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mix soap and clean water in container. 2. Shake or stir to clean inside of container. 2. Rinse container. 3. Mix 1 teaspoon (4.9 mL) bleach per 1 cup (240 mL) water and pour it in the container. 4. Cover the container and shake so the solution touches all inside surfaces. 5. Cover and let stand for 30 minutes. 6. Rinse with clean water. For more information see: http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/foodwater.asp
Clean and Sanitize Food Cans and Surfaces			
Food-contact surfaces that may have touched floodwater [Examples: countertops, plates] Note: Throw away wooden cutting boards, baby bottle nipples, and pacifiers	1 teaspoon (4.9 mL)	1 gallon	<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 gallon of clean water. 4. Allow to air dry. For more information see: http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/foodwater.asp

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Area or Item to be Cleaned	Amount of Bleach and Water to Mix		Cleaning Steps
	Bleach Amount	Water Amount	
Food cans that are not bulging, open, or damaged	1 cup (240 mL)	5 gallons	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remove can labels. 2. Wash cans with soap and clean water. 3. Dip cans in mixture of 1 cup (240 mL) of bleach per 5 gallons of water. 4. Relabel cans with a marker. For more information see: http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/foodwater.asp
Clean and Sanitize Other Household Surfaces and Items			
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clean surface with soap and clean water. 2. Disinfect with a mixture of 1 cup (240 mL) of bleach to 5 gallons of water. For more information see: http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/after.asp#cleanup <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Allow to air dry.
Clean Mold Growth Off Hard Surfaces			
Mold growth on hard surfaces [Examples: floors, stoves, sinks, certain toys, countertops, flatware, plates, and tools]	1 cup (240 mL)	1 gallon	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mix 1 cup (240 mL) of bleach in 1 gallon of water. 2. Wash the item with the bleach mixture. 3. If the surface of the item is rough, scrub the surface with a stiff brush. 4. Rinse the item with clean water. 5. Dry the item or leave it out to dry. For more information see: http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/mold/protect.asp

For more information, visit emergency.cdc.gov/disasters, or call CDC at 800-CDC-INFO (English and Spanish) or 888-232-6348 (TTY).

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