



## Decontamination Information

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

### Items from the kitchen

- Immerse glass, porcelain, china, plastic dinnerware and enamelware for 10 minutes in a disinfecting solution of 1 cup of chlorine bleach per gallon of hot water. Air-dry dishes. Do not use a towel.
- Disinfect silverware, metal utensils, and pots and pans by boiling in water for 10 minutes. Chlorine bleach should not be used in this case because it reacts with many metals and causes them to darken.

### Furniture and household items

- Mattresses should be thrown away.
- Upholstered furniture soaks up contaminants from floodwaters and should be cleaned only by a professional.
- Wood veneered furniture is usually not worth the cost and effort of repair and should be discarded. Solid wood furniture can usually be restored, unless damage is severe.
- Toys and stuffed animals should be thrown away if they've been contaminated by floodwaters.
- Photographs, books and important papers can be frozen and cleaned later. They should be dried carefully and slowly. Wash the mud off and store the articles in plastic bags and put them in a frost-free freezer to protect from mildew and further damage until you have time to thaw and clean them or take them to a professional.

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 following charts.

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"> <li>1. Clean surface with soap and warm, clean water.</li> <li>2. Rinse with clean water.</li> <li>3. Sanitize using a mixture of 1 cup (240 mL) of bleach to 5 gallons of water.</li> <li>4. Allow to air dry.</li> </ol>

## 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"> <li>1. Wash with soap and warm, clean water.</li> <li>2. Rinse with clean water.</li> <li>3. Sanitize using a mixture of 1 teaspoon (4.9 mL) of bleach per 1 gallon of clean water.</li> <li>4. Allow to air dry.</li> </ol>
Food cans that are not bulging, open, or damaged	1 cup (240 mL)	5 gallons (18.9 L)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Remove can labels.</li> <li>2. Wash cans with soap and warm, clean water.</li> <li>3. Dip cans in mixture of 1 cup (20 mL) of bleach per 5 gallons of water</li> <li>4. Allow to air dry.</li> <li>5. Re-label cans with a permanent marker</li> </ol>

## Recommendations to Clean Mold 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 gallons (3.8 L)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mix 1 cup (240 mL) of bleach in 1 gallon of water.</li> <li>2. Wash surfaces with the bleach mixture.</li> <li>3. If surfaces are rough, scrub them with a stiff brush.</li> <li>4. Rinse surfaces with clean water.</li> <li>5. Allow to air dry.</li> </ol>

- Prepare bleach solutions daily and allow to stand for at least 30 minutes before use.
- All containers should be labeled “Bleach-disinfected water, DO NOT DRINK.” CAUTION: Do not mix bleach with products containing ammonia.
- Do not immerse electrical or battery operated tools/equipment in solutions; clean exterior with a rag soaked with soap and water or disinfectant solution
- Remove and discard items that cannot be washed and disinfected (such as, mattresses, carpeting, carpet padding, rugs, upholstered furniture, cosmetics, stuffed animals, baby toys, pillows, foam-rubber items, books, wall coverings, and most paper products).
- After completing the cleanup, wash your hands with soap and warm water.
- Wash all clothes worn during the cleanup in hot water and detergent. These clothes should be washed separately from uncontaminated clothes and linens.
- Wash clothes contaminated with flood or sewage water in hot water and detergent. It is recommended that a laundromat be used for washing large quantities of clothes and linens until your onsite waste-water system has been professionally inspected and serviced.
- Seek immediate medical attention if you become injured or ill.

**For more information regarding decontamination after flooding visit:**

[www.floodsafety.com/national/property/cleanup/emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/bleach.asp](http://www.floodsafety.com/national/property/cleanup/emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/bleach.asp)