



Wisconsin Department  
of Health Services

Division of Public Health  
Climate and Health  
Program

## 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 and Sanitizing Products

- Wash surfaces with soap and warm, clean water to remove dirt and debris.
- Sanitize surfaces with a bleach solution (see below).
- It is critical to read and follow the safety instructions on any product you use. Below are important safety guidelines when using sanitizing products.
- Never mix bleach with ammonia or any other cleaner. This creates toxic gases that are dangerous and can cause serious injury. Ammonia is commonly found in window cleaner. Check the cleaner bottle to see if it contains ammonia.
- Wear rubber boots, gloves, and eye protection.
- If using bleach mixtures indoors, open windows and doors to allow fresh air to enter.

## Cleaning and Sanitizing with Bleach

Use regular, unscented 5% household bleach and follow the instructions below:

Area or Item to be Cleaned	Amount of Bleach and Water to Mix		Cleaning Steps
	Amount of Bleach	Amount of Water	
<p><b>Food surfaces that may have touched flood water</b></p> <p>Examples: countertops, cups and plates, flatware.</p> <p>Note: Throw away wooden cutting boards, infant toys, baby bottle nipples, and pacifiers.</p>	1 teaspoon	1 gallon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wash with soap and warm, clean water.</li> <li>Rinse with clean water.</li> <li>Dip or rinse in a sanitizing solution of 1 teaspoon of bleach per 1 gallon of clean water.</li> <li>Allow to air dry.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Food cans that are not bulging, open, or damaged</b></p>	1 cup	5 gallons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove can labels.</li> <li>Wash cans with soap and warm, clean water.</li> <li>Dip cans in mixture of 1 cup of bleach per 5 gallons of water.</li> <li>Allow to air-dry.</li> <li>Re-label cans with permanent marker.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Surfaces that do not soak up water and that may have touched floodwater</b></p> <p>Examples: floors, stoves, sinks, certain toys, countertops, and tools.</p>	1 cup	5 gallons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clean surface with soap and warm, clean water.</li> <li>Rinse with clean water.</li> <li>Sanitize using a mixture of 1 cup of bleach to 5 gallons of water.</li> <li>Allow to air dry.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mold growth on hard surfaces</b></p> <p>Examples: floors, walls, windows, stoves, sinks, certain toys, countertops, flatware, plates, and tools.</p>	1 cup	1 gallon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mix 1 cup of bleach in 1 gallon of water.</li> <li>Wash surfaces with the bleach/water mixture.</li> <li>If surfaces are rough, scrub them with a stiff brush.</li> <li>Rinse surfaces with clean water.</li> <li>Allow to air dry.</li> </ul>