

Cleaning and Disinfecting: Blood Spills, Feces, Vomit and Other Body Fluids

All body fluids, including blood, along with the soiled cleaning equipment used to remedy the spill must be treated as infectious and handled cautiously. Only knowledgeable individuals should perform the clean-up procedure.

Before beginning the clean-up procedure, restrict public and staff access to the affected area and do not leave the contaminated area unattended. A hazard remains until the entire contaminated area and the soiled cleaning equipment have been disposed of safely.

A. Cement and Impervious Surfaces

1. Wear gloves (preferably disposable) made with impervious material to protect your hands. Torn gloves should not be used, and avoid tearing your gloves on equipment or sharp objects. Use additional personal protective equipment (PPE), as needed, to protect personal clothing, skin, lips, and eyes.
2. Blot excess fluid using paper towels or disposable rags/cloths. Mops are not recommended because they are difficult to clean and there may be possible aerosol generation.
3. Flood the affected area generously with a pre-made bleach solution (1 part household (5.25%) bleach to 9 parts water) and let sit for a minimum of 10 minutes.
4. Blot up the bleach solution with fresh paper towels or disposable rags/cloths.
5. Place all used paper towels and rags/cloths in a sturdy, leak-proof garbage bag. If disposable gloves are used, remove and discard the gloves and other PPE at this point. Dispose of the plastic bag into the regular trash.
6. After cleaning and disinfecting the area, wash hands thoroughly with soap and water.

B. Carpet

If the spill occurs in a carpeted area, do not use a bleach solution as it can cause discoloration. A low-level disinfectant is recommended to clean the carpet. If the spill is heavy, you might want to replace the affected area of the carpet and underlay. Steam cleaning of the affected materials is also accepted.

C. Precautions for Cleaning and Disinfecting

1. Bleach is corrosive and may damage colored fabrics and corrode some surfaces unless rinsed off.
2. Bleach should only be used in well-ventilated areas and care should be taken to avoid exposure to skin, eyes and mucous membranes.

D. Alternative Disinfectants

Alternative disinfectants such as accelerated hydrogen peroxide compounds can be used to clean blood and body fluids. Disinfectants must have a drug identification number (DIN) issued by Health Canada.

The contact time and mixing instructions for cleaning blood and body fluids issued by the manufacturer must be followed. Contact time is essential. Often, merely spraying and wiping or letting the disinfectant air-dry will not ensure sufficient contact time. Keeping a surface “wet” with disinfectant for the instructed period of time must be a key consideration for the facility operator and the Environmental Health Officer.

Sanitizer concentration must be tested regularly with sanitizer test papers or other testing equipment.