

# Natural Disasters and Severe Weather

## Natural Disasters, Severe Weather, and COVID-19

Know how the COVID-19 pandemic can affect disaster preparedness and recovery, and what you can do to keep yourself and others safe.



Find information about [cleaning and disinfecting](#) at home to protect yourself during a coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak.

# 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 chart 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 tablespoon (0.5 ounces or ~15 mL)	1 gallon (3.8 L)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wash with soap and hot, clean water.</li> <li>2. Rinse with clean water.</li> <li>3. Sanitize in a solution of 1 tablespoon of household chlorine bleach in 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 (8 ounces or 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 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 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	
Non-food contact surfaces that do not soak up water and that may have touched floodwater. Examples: Floors, sinks, certain toys, and tools.	1 cup (8 ounces or 240 milliliters)	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 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 (8 ounces or 240 milliliters)	1 gallon (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> <p>For more information see: <a href="#">Mold Clean-Up After Disasters: When to Use Bleach</a></p>

Be aware that flood water may be contaminated. For more information about how to protect yourself and your family, visit [Cleanup of Flood Water](#).

For more information on cleaning and sanitizing with bleach and how to make water safe for drinking, see [Water Containers \(Cleaning and Storage\)](#) and [Make Drinking Water Safe](#).