

Clean-up Procedures for Vomit/Fecal Events

The 2013 FDA Food Code requires that all food establishments have a procedure for responding to vomiting and diarrheal events. This requirement is specified in 2-501.11 Clean-up of Vomiting & Diarrheal Events and states:

A food establishment shall have written procedures for employees to follow when responding to vomiting or diarrheal events that involve the discharge of vomitus or fecal matter onto surfaces in the food establishment the procedures shall address the specific actions employees must take to minimize the spread of contamination and the exposure of employees, consumers, food, and surfaces to vomitus or fecal matter.

Note: Effective cleaning of vomitus and/or fecal matter accidents in a food service establishment should be handled differently from routine cleaning/sanitizing procedures.

Vomiting and diarrheal accidents should be cleaned up using the following recommended steps:

- Minimize the risk of disease transmission through the prompt removal of ill employees, customers and others from areas of food preparations, service, and storage.
 - Exclude all employees that are experiencing symptoms of vomiting and/or diarrhea and follow the employee health policy of when to restrict/exclude an ill food employee.
- Segregate the area, and cover the vomit/fecal matter with single use disposable towels to prevent aerosolization.
- Mix a chlorine bleach solution that is stronger than the chlorine solution used for general sanitizing, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends 1000 ppm or 5 tablespoons of regular household bleach (5.25%) per gallon of water.
 - Note: Some quaternary ammonia sanitizers are effective for Norovirus (see the reference section of this document for a link to find a list of EPA listed sanitizers).
- Wear disposable gloves during cleaning. To prevent the spread of disease, it is highly recommended that a disposable mask and/or cover gown, or apron, and shoe covers be worn when cleaning liquid matter.

- Ensure the affected area is adequately ventilated (the chlorine bleach solution can become an irritant when inhaled for some individuals and can become an irritant on skin as well).
- Soak/wipe up the vomit and/or fecal matter with towels and dispose of them into a plastic garbage bag.
- Apply the bleach solution onto the contaminated surface area and allow it to remain wet on the affected surface area for at least 10 minutes. Also sanitize the surrounding area in a **25 foot radius**, including food contact surfaces. (When someone has a vomiting or diarrheal accident, germs such as Norovirus can spread by air and contaminate surfaces and food as far as **25 feet away**)
- Allow the area to air dry. Dispose of any remaining sanitizer solution once the accident has been cleaned up.
- Discard all gloves, masks, and cover gowns (or aprons) in a plastic bag and dispose of the bag immediately.
- Take measures to dispose of and/or clean and disinfect the tools and equipment used to clean up the vomit and/or fecal matter.
- **PROPERLY WASH YOUR HANDS – AND IF POSSIBLE TAKE A SHOWER AND CHANGE YOUR CLOTHES.**
- Discard any food that may have been exposed in the affected area.
- An incident report of actions that were taken as a result of an individual being sick should be completed. Include information such as: the location of the incident, the time and date, and procedures of the cleanup process. Keep the information on file by the business for at least a year. NOTE: the information may be useful for an investigation conducted by the Environmental Health.

References:

FDA 2013 Food Code

<http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/RetailFoodProtection/FoodCode/ucm374275.htm>

Center for Disease Control: Preventing Norovirus Infection

<http://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/preventing-infection.html>

<http://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/downloads/foodhandlers.pdf>

Environmental Protection Agency – Selected EPA-Registered Disinfectants

<http://www.epa.gov/oppad001/chemregindex.htm>