

Proper Sewage Clean Up Procedures



If you have items contaminated by flood waters or sewage spills, proper cleaning and disinfecting procedures should be followed to prevent illness. Raw sewage contains biological agents such as bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites that can cause serious illness and even death. Always presume that floodwater is contaminated with sewage.

Cleaning sewage contaminated items and sewage spills inside your home:

- Wear protective clothing such as rubber boots and waterproof gloves while cleaning up the spill or handling contaminated items.
- Wash all linens and clothing in hot water or professionally dry clean.
- Discard items that cannot be adequately cleaned in hot water or dry cleaned, such as mattresses, carpeting, wall coverings and upholstered furniture. Assume anything touched by sewage to be contaminated. **DO NOT** eat any food items that may have come in contact with flood water or sewage.
- Clean walls, hard-surfaced floors, and other household surfaces with soap and water. Then, disinfect with a solution of 1/4 cup of bleach in one gallon of water. Once clean up is complete, dry out affected items to prevent the growth of mold. **WARNING: Do not mix ammonia cleansers with bleach as toxic vapors will form.**

Always practice proper hygiene to prevent illness:

Thoroughly wash hands with soap and water immediately following cleanup efforts and before preparing food, eating, or drinking.

Keep your fingernails short and clean. Use a stiff brush to remove dirt and foreign materials.

For sewage spills outside your home:

Contact your utility and/or a registered septic tank contractor for clean up. **REMEMBER to keep children and pets away from any areas potentially contaminated by sewage.**

Minor spills requiring immediate attention may be disinfected with regular garden lime from a garden shop. Follow the lime container's label instructions, especially warnings and cautions.

Sprinkle the lime onto the spill so the spill is dusted mostly white on the surface. If the residue is thicker in some places use a rake to mix the lime and the residue.

After a day, rake up the thicker residue and place it in a trash bag for disposal with the other trash. Use a sprinkler or hose to water the lime and residue into the soil.

Let the area dry in the sun a day before allowing access. If there is still white lime dust visible on the yard, water it in until the white dust is gone.

If you have questions, please contact:

Southwest District Health

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<http://www.swdh.org>

For more information:

EPA-Sewer Overflows:

www.epa.gov/npdes/pubs/ssodesc.pdf

CDC-Mold:

www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/mold/protect.asp

CDC-Floods: www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/floods