



Hand Hygiene

Handling Contaminated Objects

- Wear protective gloves when handling contaminated objects, handling human or animal remains or working in contaminated floodwaters. Floodwater can be contaminated with micro-organisms, sewage, industrial waste, chemicals and other substances that can cause illness or death.
- Gloves should be heavy, cut-resistant and made of waterproof material, such as nitrile or similar washable material.
- Wash hands with soap and clean (or disinfected) water after cleanup or decontamination work, before preparing or eating food and after toilet use.
- Wash wounds with soap and clean (or disinfected) water or a hand sanitizer immediately.
- Seek immediate medical attention if wound becomes red, swollen or oozes pus.
- If handling objects contaminated by chemicals, refer to the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) to make sure you are wearing the appropriate glove for the hazard.

Disinfecting Water for Hand Washing

- Contaminated water can be bleach-disinfected by mixing 1/4 teaspoon of household bleach per 1 gallon of water.
- Let bleach-water mixture stand for 30 minutes.

Disinfecting Water for Tool/Surface Decontamination

- Use soap and clean water when available.
- If only contaminated water is available, prepare a solution for tools and surfaces of 1/4 cup household bleach per 1 gallon of water.
- Prepare fresh solutions daily and use as soon as possible after preparation.
- Immerse objects in the solution for 10 minutes.
- Be aware, bleach can damage firefighters' turnout gear; consult manufacturer.
- Always label disinfecting water containers with a warning, such as "bleach-disinfected water - DO NOT DRINK."

Germ Free

- Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps to take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others.
- It is best to wash your hands with soap and clean running water for 20 seconds. However, if soap and clean water are not available, use an alcohol-based product to clean your hands. Alcohol-based handrubs significantly reduce the number of germs on skin and are fast acting.

When Washing Hands with Soap and Water:

- Wet your hands with clean running water and apply soap. Use warm water if it is available.
- Rub hands together to make a lather and scrub all surfaces.
- Continue rubbing hands for 20 seconds. Need a timer? Imagine singing “Happy Birthday” twice through to a friend!
- Rinse hands well under running water.
- Dry your hands using a paper towel or air dryer. If possible, use your paper towel to turn off the faucet.

Safety tips developed based on generally accepted safety standards believed to be reliable at the date of publication. Information is for general guidance only and should not be relied upon for legal compliance purposes.

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