

## CLEANING UP INDOOR SEWAGE SPILLS

Thorough cleaning of indoor sewage spills is necessary to protect people -- especially small children -- from harmful bacteria and viruses. Clean-up should begin as soon as possible to reduce the risk of exposure to sewage.

### Clean up tips:

- Keep children and pets out of the area until clean-up has been completed.
- Wear rubber gloves and boots. Use eye protection.
- Wash your hands thoroughly and launder clothes separately after completing the clean-up.
- Remove all furniture, loose rugs, and so on from the area.
- Saturated wall-to-wall carpeting (and the pad) usually cannot be adequately cleaned. They should be removed, wrapped in plastic, and taken to a transfer station or sanitary landfill. If you decide to keep the carpeting, hire a licensed carpet cleaning company to steam clean and disinfect the carpet.
- All hard surfaces, such as linoleum, hardwood floors, concrete, wood moldings, wood, and metal furniture, and on should be thoroughly cleaned with hot water and a mild detergent (dish detergent), and then rinsed with a bleach solution by mixing one tablespoon of liquid household unscented bleach to one gallon of water. Let the surface air dry.
- Upholstered furniture, loose rugs, drapery, and so on should be professionally cleaned. Notify the cleaner of the problem.
- Remove and replace plaster, plasterboard, and lath that have been saturated and are soft to the touch. If the surface has been wetted, clean as you would a hard surface, but do not saturate the plaster.

- Clean sinks, dishwashers, and other plumbing fixtures that have had sewage back-up with detergent, and then rinse with the bleach solution.
- Disinfect clean-up mops, brooms, and brushes with the bleach solution.
- Prevent mold growth and reduce odors by increasing air circulation -- open all windows and doors. The use of fans and heaters may speed this process.

### You can clean undamaged canned food

1. Remove labels;
2. Wash with a scrub brush in a detergent solution (use washed cans as soon as possible because they will rust);
3. Rinse in clean water;
4. Sanitize by:
  - Boiling for 10 minutes, (Do not boil cans of carbonated beverages), or
  - Immersing cans in bleach solution for 15 minutes;
5. Re-label with marker or grease pencil.

### Discard

- Sealed food items;
- Home canned foods;
- Food items packaged in paper or cardboard;
- Unpackaged foods such as fruit, potatoes.

**WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!**

See back page for information on:

### DISINFECTION

### SAFE HANDLING OF DISINFECTANTS



## CLEANING UP OUTDOOR SEWAGE SPILLS

- Keep children and pets out of the area until clean-up has been completed.
- Wear rubber gloves and boots. Use eye protection.
- Do not allow wastewater to enter the storm drains.
- Shovel and bag all solid waste in the spill area. Dispose in the trash container.
- Clean hard surfaces such as paving, concrete and decking with a detergent solution then disinfect. Disinfect the area by spraying a bleach solution that is made by mixing one tablespoon of liquid household bleach to one gallon of water. Use only approved disinfectants. Allow spill area to air dry
- Contaminated soil, sand or lawn should be allowed to degrade naturally as microbes will be inactivated within several days of exposure to UV radiation from sunlight. Bacterial numbers on grass are generally reduced to background levels within 20 days. Place barriers and signs to restrict access during this time.
- Clean all equipment and personal protective equipment used (clean-up mops, brooms, brushes, etc.) with a detergent then disinfect (or use a combined product) or discard.
- Wash your hands thoroughly and launder clothes separately after completing the cleanup.

### DISINFECTION

Chemical disinfectants kill or inhibit the growth of microbes. Many household products are useful disinfectants and should be used in accordance with the manufacturers label directions. Bleach (sodium hypochlorite) is the most commonly used disinfectant and should be used as a 1:10 dilution. Do not use undiluted bleach as this can cause severe skin and respiratory problems.

Note that normal household detergents do not necessarily kill microbes. Use only products that are disinfectants. The term anti-bacterial means that it kills bacteria but is not necessarily effective against viruses and parasites.

### SAFE HANDLING OF DISINFECTANTS

Chemical detergents and disinfectants can have varying degrees of reactivity, depending upon the active chemicals. The chemical can affect the skin, eyes and mucous membranes of the user and may affect the airways and lungs.

- Wear rubber gloves and goggles when working with cleaning products.
- Read the label carefully before using a disinfectant.
- Only use the disinfectant in well-ventilated areas, and be aware of the handling precautions and first aid procedures.
- Apply disinfectant to all areas of the affected surface and allow for sufficient contact time before rinsing and allow to air dry thoroughly. 15-30 minutes contact time is a good guide when disinfecting with bleach.

• **Do not mix bleach with ammonia cleaners.** The chlorine fumes are highly toxic.