



Clean-up Procedure for Vomit/Fecal Accidents in Food Service Operations

The 2016 Ohio Uniform Food Safety Code requires that all food service operations and retail food establishments have written procedures for employees to follow when responding to vomiting and diarrheal events. Information from this document can help develop written procedures for a facility.

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

It is recommended that written procedures for cleaning up vomiting and diarrheal accidents include the following steps:

1. Segregate the area. It is recommended that all surfaces within a 25-foot radius of the vomit or diarrhea accident be segregated and properly cleaned and disinfected.
2. Wear disposable gloves during cleaning. To help prevent the spread of disease, it is recommended that a disposable mask and/or cover gown (apron) be worn when cleaning liquid matter.
3. Wipe up the matter with towels and dispose into a plastic garbage bag.
4. Use a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered disinfectant effective against Norovirus (Norwalk-like virus) following label directions or mix a chlorine bleach solution that is stronger than the chlorine solution used for general cleaning [CDC recommends 1000-5000 ppm or 2.5-12.5 fluid ounces of household bleach (5.25%) per gallon of water].

Note: quaternary ammonia is not an effective sanitizer for Norovirus.

5. Apply the disinfectant or bleach solution and allow it to remain wet in the affected area for at least 10 minutes. Allow to air dry. Dispose of any remaining disinfection solution once the accident has been cleaned up.
6. Discard gloves, mask, and cover gown (or apron) in a plastic bag.
7. Take measures to dispose of and/or clean and disinfect the tools and equipment used to clean up vomit and fecal matter.
8. Properly wash hands.
9. Discard any food that may have been exposed.
10. Food contact surfaces that have been disinfected must be washed, rinsed, and sanitized prior to use to remove disinfectant residue and prevent contamination of food.
11. Discard all garbage bags in the dumpster or waste receptacle. If any of the waste appears to contain blood, refer to the Ohio EPA guidelines for disposal of infectious waste (https://epa.ohio.gov/portals/34/document/guidance/gd_75.pdf).
12. Minimize the risk of disease transmission through the prompt removal of ill employees, customers and others from areas of food preparation, service, and storage.
13. Monitoring of clean-up employees for symptoms for 72 hours post event.

Additional Resources:

CDC Preventing Norovirus Infection: <https://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/about/prevention.html>.