



## COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO

### Environmental Health Services

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# Basic Sewage Back-Up Cleanup Guidelines

## Safety First

- Assume anything in contact with sewage is contaminated.
- Wash hands frequently.
- Disinfect things in contact with sewage.
- Wear gloves and take extra precautions if you have cuts or sores.
- Wear waterproof rubber boots to keep feet dry.

## Clean-up Procedure:

### Indoor Clean-up

#### STEP 1.

Gather up cleaning supplies. (Mops, brooms, buckets, cleaning products, disinfectants, gloves and trash bags)

#### STEP 2.

Sort affected goods to be repaired or discarded or disinfected.

#### Recommended actions for items soaked by sewage:

#### Usually Throw Out:

- Large carpets
- Books and paper products
- Foam rubber
- Food\*

\*Discard all exposed food to sewage and floodwaters except food in sealed metal cans. Remove labels, wash in detergent and place in a chlorine solution of 1 teaspoon of laundry bleach for each 2 gallons of water, then air dry.

## Always Throw Out:

- Cardboard
- Cosmetics
- Medicine & medical supplies
- Stuffed animals
- Toys
- Mattresses and pillows
- Upholstered couches and chairs
- Carpet padding

#### STEP 3.

Clean up one room at a time.

- Use a 2-bucket system. One bucket for the recommended cleaning solution (see below) and the other bucket for rinsing. First clean, then rinse the mop, sponge or cloth in the rinse bucket. Wring it dry and re-wet it in the cleaning solution. Change the rinse water frequently.
- After cleaning the room or item, go over it with an approved disinfectant (see below) to kill the germs and odor left by the sewage or floodwaters.

#### STEP 4.

Dry out your home and Check for mold/mildew concerns.

- Open outside doors and windows.
- Open closet doors and cabinets.
- Circulate the air with fans.
- Run a dehumidifier.

**BE AWARE OF POTENTIAL DAMAGE TO UTILITIES (GAS AND ELECTRIC) FROM CONTAMINATED WATER. IF YOU ARE NOT COMFORTABLE WORKING ON YOUR UTILITIES OR APPLIANCES, CALL A PROFESSIONAL.**

## Outdoor Clean-up

### STEP 1.

Remove any gross contamination and debris and dispose of in a sewage treatment facility and **not** into storm drains or landfill.

### STEP 2.

#### Clean

- **Hard surfaces** such as paving, concrete and tarmac should be cleaned using a detergent solution followed by disinfection. Use only approved disinfectants (see below).
- **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.
- **Do not allow wastewater to enter the storm drains.** For large spills it may be necessary to construct an impervious embankment of earth, brick, stone or other suitable material to retain liquid. This is known as "bundling". Liquid should be disposed of to sewer or a suitable workplace collection pit. **Contact the local Water Board for further advice.**

## Recommended Solutions

### To Clean

- 1<sup>st</sup> Choice: Non-sudsing household cleaners.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Choice: Laundry soap or detergent.

### To Disinfect

- 1<sup>st</sup> Choice: 10% solution of liquid bleach (3/4 cup in 1 gallon of water).
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Choice: Household disinfectant such as quaternary phenolic or pine oil disinfectants (check labels).

**DO NOT MIX BLEACH WITH OTHER HOUSEHOLD CHEMICAL PRODUCTS ESPECIALLY AMMONIA OR TOILET BOWL CLEANER, THE CHEMICAL REACTION CAN PRODUCE A POISONOUS GAS!!!**

### Following Indoor and Outdoor Clean-up

- **Wash your hands** with soap and warm water.
- **Clean all used cleaning supplies, equipment and personal protective equipment** with a detergent then disinfect (or use a combined product) or discard if possible (eg. mop heads).
- **Wash contaminated clothes** in hot water and detergent.
- **Seek immediate medical attention** if you become injured or ill.