

# Disasters and Food Safety

## Make Your Own Bleach Sanitizer

---



Make disinfecting cleaner at home if unable to find it at the store. Use it to sanitize surfaces such as tables, counters, floors, doorknobs, toilets, showers, faucets, and sinks.

### Supplies Needed \*

- 1 quart or 4 cups of room-temperature water
- 1 teaspoon household bleach per quart of water
- Small bucket or spray bottle
- Masking tape
- Ink pen
- Rubber cleaning gloves
- Cleaning rag or towel

\* NOTE: The recipe for this bleach sanitizer is specifically for disaster cleanup.

### How To Make Bleach Sanitizer at Home

- Place a bucket or spray bottle on a flat surface.
- Add water to the bucket or spray bottle.
- Carefully pour the correct amount of regular, unscented household bleach into the container. If using a spray bottle, consider using a funnel to pour the bleach into the bottle safely.
- Label the sanitizer. With the ink pen, write “sanitizer” or “bleach cleaner” on the masking tape and attach the tape to the bucket or spray bottle containing the bleach mixture.

When cleaning up mold, use a solution of 1 cup of bleach per gallon of water for sanitizing purposes.

When cleaning toys or non-porous household items, if they’ve come in contact with flood water, sanitize them using 1 tablespoon of bleach per 5 gallons of water.



## Using the Sanitizer

- Clean all surfaces that need sanitizing with soapy water BEFORE using sanitizer on that surface. Food particles, soiled or sticky surfaces, and other contamination can deactivate the bleach in your sanitizer.
- Put on rubber cleaning gloves. The gloves help protect hands since bleach is irritating to the skin.
- Sanitize the surfaces:
  - From a spray bottle: Spray sanitizer directly onto the pre-cleaned surfaces.
  - From a bucket: Dip a clean cloth into sanitizer and lightly wring out the excess before applying it to surfaces.
- Allow sanitizer to air dry.

## Call Your Local Office

Contact your local Illinois Extension office with your food safety questions: [go.illinois.edu/FindILExtension](https://go.illinois.edu/FindILExtension).

## References

- [When and How to Clean and Disinfect Your Home](#), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Modified March 2025