

Clean-up Procedures for Vomit/Fecal Accidents

The **2015 Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Food Code** requires that all food establishments have a procedure for responding to vomiting and diarrheal events. This requirement is specified under Regulation **§228.45** and states:

A FOOD ESTABLISHMENT shall have procedures for EMPLOYEES to follow when responding to vomiting or diarrheal events that involve the discharge of vomitus or fecal matter onto surfaces in the FOOD ESTABLISHMENT. The procedures shall address the specific actions EMPLOYEES must take to minimize the spread of contamination and the exposure of EMPLOYEES, consumers, FOOD, and surfaces to vomitus or fecal matter.^{Pf}

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

Vomiting and diarrheal accidents should be cleaned up using the following recommended steps:

- Segregate the area.
- Wear disposable gloves during cleaning. To help prevent the spread of disease, it is recommended that a disposable mask and/or cover gown (or apron) be worn when cleaning liquid matter.
- Wipe up the matter with towels and dispose into a plastic garbage bag.
- Mix a chlorine bleach solution that is stronger than the chlorine solution used for general cleaning [the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends 1000-5000 ppm or 5-25 tablespoons of household bleach (5.25%) per gallon of water]. Note: quaternary ammonia is not an effective sanitizer for *Norovirus*.
- Apply the 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 sanitizer solution once the accident has been cleaned up.
- Discard gloves, mask, and cover gown (or apron) in a plastic bag.
- Take measures to dispose of and/or clean and disinfect the tools and equipment used to clean up vomit and fecal matter.
- Properly wash hands.
- Discard any food that may have been exposed.
- Minimize the risk of disease transmission through the prompt removal of ill employees, customers and others from areas of food preparation, service, and storage.

Additional references:

FDA 2013 Food Code <http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/RetailFoodProtection/FoodCode/ucm374275.htm>

Center for Disease Control: Preventing Norovirus Infection <http://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/preventing-infection.html>

DSHS 2015 Food Code <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/foodestablishment>