



**Department of  
Early Education and Care**  
THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

**Family, Small Group, Large Group and School Age Licensing**

**POLICY STATEMENT:   Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting**

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Regulations of the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) require family, small group, large group, and school age child care programs to ensure that equipment, materials, and the environment are maintained in a sanitary condition. The regulations further provide that sanitizing and disinfectant solutions used in the child care environment must be either a bleach solution prepared by the licensee or a commercially prepared disinfectant that has been registered as a sanitizing solution by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). *See 606 CMR 7.11(10)(f)-(p).*

This policy provides additional information regarding the means, methods and frequency of cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting required to comply with these regulations.<sup>1</sup> The goal of safe cleaning is effective germ control using the safest amount of cleaning, sanitizing or disinfecting product.

In accordance with Department of Public Health (DPH) recommendations, cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting must be completed as follows:

1. Cleaning alone is sufficient for some surfaces. Cleaning means to physically remove dirt, debris and sticky film from a surface by scrubbing, washing, wiping and rinsing. Cleaning is done with regular (not antibacterial) soap or detergent and water. Towels, washcloths, sheets, pillowcases and other coverings, and machine washable fabric toys must be cleaned and dried before use by another child, and at least weekly. Wash cloths used for multiple purposes should be cleaned and dried after every use. These items do not need to be sanitized or disinfected.
2. Sanitizing or disinfecting must follow cleaning as required. Cleaning first allows the sanitizing or disinfecting product to come in contact with the surface.
3. Sanitizing (*after cleaning*) is the proper treatment for most equipment and surfaces in early education and care programs. Sanitizing surfaces destroys enough germs to reduce the risk of becoming ill from contact with those surfaces.
4. Disinfecting (*after cleaning*) is the proper treatment for surfaces or equipment where safe contact requires a more powerful response to germs. Disinfecting is the proper treatment for equipment and surfaces that are involved with toileting and Special Precautions.
5. Special Precautions treatment requires that surfaces or equipment exposed to blood or vomit spills be disinfected (with the standard disinfectant solution) while wearing gloves.

6. Sponges must not be used for sanitizing or disinfecting.
7. Surfaces and equipment must air dry after sanitizing or disinfecting. Do not wipe dry unless it is a product instruction.
8. Small items requiring sanitizing (such as pacifiers) may be dipped in a container for that purpose filled with sanitizing solution and allowed to air dry, or may be washed and dried in dishwasher.
9. All sanitizing and disinfecting solutions must be labeled properly to identify the contents; kept out of the reach of children; and stored separately from food items. Do not store sanitizing and disinfecting solutions in beverage containers.

### **Frequency of Sanitizing and Disinfecting**

The following item must be cleaned and sanitized daily, before and after each use:

Cleaned and Sanitized:

- All surfaces used for eating

The following items, equipment and surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized or disinfected after each use:

Cleaned and Sanitized:

- Bibs (when used for only one child, good judgment should be used in deciding whether a bib can be reused before washing.)
- Thermometers
- Toys mouthed by infants and toddlers
- Bottles, eating & drinking utensils and dishes, and preparation utensils
- Mops, cloths, or other cleaning equipment *when not used for cleaning body fluids.*

Cleaned and Disinfected:

- Toilet training chairs which have first been emptied into a toilet
- Sinks and faucets used for hand washing after the sink is used for rinsing a toilet training chair
- Diapering surfaces
- Mops, cloths, or other cleaning equipment used for cleaning body fluids (*using Standard Precautions*)

The following items, equipment and surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized or disinfected at least daily:

Cleaned and Sanitized:

- Sinks and sink faucets (except when used following toileting activities)
- Drinking fountains
- Play tables
- Pacifiers, labeled and reserved for individual use
- Smooth surfaced, non-porous floors. (Programs operating four or fewer hours per day may wash floors on a weekly basis provided that there are no infants or toddlers in the program. All spills or accidents must be cleaned up immediately.)

Cleaned and Disinfected:

- Toilets and toilet seats
- Containers, including lids, used to hold soiled diapers
- Sinks and sink faucets used after toileting activities
- Water tables and water play equipment

The following items, equipment and surfaces be must be cleaned and sanitized at least weekly and before use by another child.

- Cribs, cots, mats and other approved sleeping equipment.

### **Sanitizing and Disinfecting Solutions**

Recent research regarding the increasing incidence of asthma among children and adults indicates that bleach used as a sanitizing or disinfecting solution can be an asthma trigger. As currently used, non-bleach products could be safer and just as effective as bleach-based products. For this reason, the Massachusetts Departments of Public Health and the Department of Early Education and Care recommend that, while bleach and water solutions are still allowed, programs begin using EPA Registered sanitizing and disinfecting products without bleach as soon as they become available for purchase. The EPA Registered products will be identified as sanitizing products or disinfecting products. Different products will likely be required for each purpose.

### **Sanitizing and Disinfecting with Bleach and Water**

Programs using a self-made bleach solution must follow the guidelines in this policy in determining the appropriate concentration of bleach for each use. The recommendations below are for commercial bleach products with an 8.25% bleach concentration only. If you are using a different bleach concentration, different dilutions are required. The dilutions for bleach concentrations other than 8.25% are available in the Safe Cleaning and Products Fact Sheet on the EEC Website.

All bleach and water dilutions must be freshly mixed every 24 hours.

The recommended SANITIZING dilution for 8.25% bleach is:

- 2 teaspoons bleach to 1 Gallon cool water
- 1 teaspoon bleach to 1/2 Gallon cool water
- 1/2 teaspoon bleach to 1 Quart cool water
- 1/4 teaspoon bleach to 1 Pint cool water

The recommended DISINFECTING dilution for 8.25% bleach is:

- 1/2 cup bleach to 1 Gallon cool water
- 1/4 cup bleach to 1/2 Gallon cool water
- 2 Tablespoons bleach to 1 Quart cool water
- 1 Tablespoon bleach to 1 Pint cool water

Bleach solutions should be prepared daily to ensure their ability to safely sanitize or disinfect. When preparing sanitizing or disinfecting dilutions always *add bleach to water*. (This helps to avoid bleach splashes caused by adding water to bleach.) Use either the sanitizing or the disinfecting dilution as specified above.

### **Application of Sanitizing/Disinfecting Solutions**

Sanitizing and Disinfecting solutions without bleach must be applied in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations.

Sanitizing and Disinfecting solutions with bleach:

- Apply the bleach dilution after cleaning the surface
- It is recommended that bleach solutions be applied with a disposable cloth rinsed in the solution and discarded after each use, or with a non- disposable cloth that is laundered in hot water and dried after each use. Paper towels also may be used. For all methods of applying bleach solutions, surfaces should be visibly wet. Surfaces should be allowed to air dry.
- If using a spray bottle, adjust the setting to produce a heavy spray or stream instead of a fine mist when possible. The fine mist could contain particles of strong chemicals which can cause asthma or allergy like symptoms.
- Allow for the contact time specified on the label of the bleach product.
- Apply when children are not present in the area and allow for fresh air ventilation when possible until bleach solution has dried.

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EEC- Gail Perry, Sharon Shumack - Asthma and Allergy Foundation; Liz Tanefis - Health Resources in Action; and Tolle Graham-Mass COSH.

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The following resources were used in preparing this document:

American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. 2011. Caring for our children: National health and safety performance standards; Guidelines for early care and education programs. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; Washington DC: American Public Health Association.

Also available at <http://nrckids.org>

Green Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting Toolkit for Early Care and Education, 2013  
University of California, San Francisco School of Nursing, Institute for Health and Aging  
University of California, Berkeley's Center for Environmental Research and Children's Health  
Informed Green Solutions

<http://www2.epa.gov/childcare/green-cleaning-sanitizing-and-disinfecting-toolkit>

Oregon Health Authority  
Oregon Kids Healthy and Safe  
[www.healthoregon.org/childcare](http://www.healthoregon.org/childcare)

California Childcare Health Program  
UCSF School of Nursing  
[www.ucsfchildcarehealth.org](http://www.ucsfchildcarehealth.org)

MA DPH Pediatric Asthma Surveillance : Bureau of Environmental Health

"In 2012, approximately 37,000 children 0-5 years old have been diagnosed with Asthma in MA. "