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Environmental Health Services

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Florida Department of Health
Division of Environmental Health

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**Cleaning Up After
Injury or Accident
in Your Home**

**Environmental Health Services
Florida Department of Health**

An **injury or accident** in your home may result in what is known as **biomedical waste**.

Biomedical waste is any liquid or solid waste that may present a threat of infection to humans. Liquid waste includes blood and other body fluids from humans. Solid waste includes clothing, towels, rags, sheets, gloves, plastic bags, or any objects soiled with blood, or other body fluids.

These guidelines will help you to safely clean up after an injury or accident. The Environmental Health Section of your health department can provide you with a listing of companies who provide this type of service. Fees may vary.

What Do I Need?

Before the start of cleanup, make sure to protect yourself. You will need the following items:

- **Rubber gloves** to protect your hands
- **Glasses or goggles** to protect your eyes
- **Mask or handkerchief** to protect your nose and mouth
- **Large shirt or plastic garbage bag** to cover your clothes
- **Kitchen tongs or pliers** to pick up any sharp items
- **Cat litter, dry swimming pool chlorine,** (or paper towels, cloth towels or rags) to absorb liquid waste
- **Broom and dustpan or household spatula** to pick up the litter or dry chlorine after absorption
- **Plastic bags** to contain soiled items
- **Tin can or plastic bottle** with lid to contain any sharp items
- **Heavy-duty tape** for securing the lid
- **Household bleach** for wiping soiled area
- **Measuring cup** for mixing a bleach solution

How Do I Clean Up a Soiled Area?

1. Cover your clothes with an old shirt or plastic bag
2. Use glasses or goggles and mask or handkerchief if there is a chance of splashing blood or body fluids
3. Using tongs or pliers, pick up any sharp objects and place them in a hard plastic or metal container with a screw-on or tightly secured lid. Be sure to reinforce the lid with heavy-duty tape.

CAUTION: Do not use clear plastic. Do not use a container you plan to recycle.

4. Apply cat litter or dry swimming pool chlorine directly onto any liquid waste until it becomes absorbed.
5. Sweep the absorbed material into a dustpan or scoop it up with a household spatula and place it in a doubled, plastic garbage bag. Securely tie the bag.

Note: If cat litter or dry swimming pool chlorine is not available, you can absorb the liquid waste with disposable or reusable towels or rags. Place the used disposable towels into a doubled, plastic garbage bag and securely tie the bag. Place reusable towels into a separate plastic bag for laundering.

6. Mix one-half cup of bleach with one gallon of water. Wipe the entire soiled area with this solution. If disposable items are used to wipe the area, place them in a doubled, plastic garbage bag and securely tie the bag. If reusable items are used, place them in a separate bag for laundering.

How Do I Discard the Soiled Items?

1. Be sure all disposable items are in plastic bags that are securely tied. Place the bags and the metal or plastic containers in the center of your garbage can.

Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water.

2. If you plan to discard large soiled objects such as carpets, mattresses, and furniture, use the same bleach mixture (one half-cup bleach to one gallon of water) pour over the soiled area.

Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water.

3. Contact your local garbage collection office and ask for instructions for pick up of large items. If this service is not available in your area, ask if you may transport the item to the local landfill.

Note: If neither of these options is available in your area, contact the environmental health section of your local health department and request a listing of registered biomedical waste transporters who may provide this type of service. Fees may vary.

How Do I Wash Soiled Reusable Items?

1. Place all soiled reusable items in your washer. Run one cycle using one half cup of bleach for each gallon of water capacity for your washer.
2. Run a second cycle using your regular laundry detergent.

Caution: Should you cut yourself during the clean-up process, call your health care provider as soon as you can.