

Cleaning and Disinfecting after a Disaster

Follow these simple rules for cleaning and disinfecting items after a disaster:

1. Make sure the item is in **good repair**. Items that have been torn, splintered, cracked, broken, dented, etc. should be discarded and replaced.
2. To clean small items that are **porous**, (will absorb water) such as bedding, clothing, stuffed animals, etc. wash in the hottest water setting of an automatic washer and dry thoroughly. For larger items that are **porous** such as upholstered furniture, carpeting and rugs, draperies, etc. surface clean as much as possible, then use a steam cleaner on the hottest setting appropriate to the items being cleaned. Be sure items are allowed to completely dry.
3. To clean items that are **solid** (will not absorb water) such as a concrete, tile, or vinyl flooring, plastic patio furniture, plastic toys, picture frames, appliances, etc. use a mild household detergent solution to clean the item.
4. To disinfect **solid** items, make a mild bleach and water solution (1/4 cup of bleach to one gallon of water). Use the solution in one of these ways:
 - Immerse small objects in the bleach/water solution for one minute. Remove from the solution and allow to air dry.
 - Spritz/spray the bleach/water solution on the item until thoroughly wet and allow to air dry.
 - Use a cloth dipped in the bleach/water solution to completely wipe the item down and allow to air dry.

For more information, contact:

The Bremer County Environmental Health Department at 319.352.0332.