

Cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfection for food distribution operations

- **Food Distribution** Operations include Food Donors and Donated Food Distribution Organizations (DFDO).
- **Food donors** are people, groups, and organizations that donate food to DFDOs.
- **A donated food distribution organization** is a charitable organization that provides food, free of charge to the public (e.g., shelters serving people experiencing homelessness).

Although they are not held to the same standards as permitted food businesses, food donors and DFDOs are required to comply with state food safety rules. Learn more about Washington State Dept. of Health's [food code and regulations on Charity Food Donations](#).

DEFINITIONS

- **Food-contact surfaces** are dishes, utensils, and equipment that come into direct contact with food. (e.g., mixing bowls, cutting boards, serving spoons, blenders, etc.)
- **Non-food contact surfaces** include food preparation, food storage areas such as counters, tables, pantries, shelving units, appliances, etc. They are areas used to store, prepare, or serve food and are touched by food workers often.
- **Facility**, for the purpose of this document, refers to rooms and surfaces outside of the food preparation and service space (e.g., restroom, lobby, hallways, etc.)
- **Cleaning** uses soap or detergent mixed with warm water and scrubbed to **remove dirt and debris** from surfaces.
- **Sanitizing** is meant to **reduce, but not kill**, the occurrence and growth of germs on surfaces.
- **Disinfection** uses a chemical to **kill germs** on surfaces. Disinfectants are very strong and usually require a longer surface contact time (between 1 - 10 minutes) to work.

DO NOT use a disinfectant on food and non-food contact surfaces. Disinfectants are strong and should not be used within food preparation/storage areas, to protect those surfaces from chemical contamination.
- **Contact time** is the amount of time a surface needs to remain wet (with a sanitizer or disinfectant solution) in order for germicidal activity to occur. Adhere to the product label's instruction for contact time as this period can range between 30 seconds to 10 minutes (sometimes more), depending on the product being used and the types of germs that need to be eliminated.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

- **Wash hands** when entering a kitchen or food preparation space.
- **Ensure ill staff stay home.** Staff who are not ill, but live with a person(s) or have been in contact with symptomatic people, should not be preparing or handling food for others.

- **Always follow the product label instructions.** Ensure chemicals used in the kitchen are intended for kitchen or restaurant settings and are appropriate for food contact surfaces.
- **Label** bottles/containers when preparing your own sanitizers and disinfectants.
- **Protect yourself** before handling any chemicals. Chemicals can be very damaging to skin. Always wear gloves. Read the label for information on required.
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).**
- **Never mix** different types of chemicals together, and never add soap to your sanitizing or disinfecting solution.
- **Open doors and windows** when cleaning, to maximize air circulation and minimize health risks.
- **Use single-use paper towels** when cleaning with spray-bottle chemicals. Wiping cloths can harbor germs if they are not disinfected in between use on multiple surfaces. Wiping cloths are appropriate when solutions are prepared in a bucket, allowing them to be fully submerged in the solution and disinfected throughout the cleaning process.

SELECTING THE RIGHT PRODUCT TO SANITIZE FOOD AND NON-FOOD CONTACT SURFACES

- Bleach and quaternary ammonium compounds (QUAT) are appropriate sanitizers for food-contact surfaces. Dilute them per the product label's instructions and use test strips (if possible) to measure solution's strength.
 - Maintain bleach sanitizers between 50-200 ppm
 - Maintain QUAT sanitizers between 200-400 ppm
- Do not use scented, splash-free or chlorine-free bleach—these types of bleach are not designed to sanitize and disinfect, nor are they meant to be used in kitchen settings.
- Disinfecting wipes are acceptable for facility surfaces outside of the kitchen. Select a product that is effective against Human Coronaviruses, Hepatitis A (HAV), or Norovirus.

NOTE: Products that fight HAV or Norovirus will kill COVID-19.

WASHING AND SANITIZING FOOD-CONTACT SURFACES

Food contact surfaces include dishes, utensils, and cooking equipment.

- **Provide a trash** can to scrape off food scraps.
- **Use an automatic dishwasher or a three-compartment sink** to wash, rinse, and sanitize dishes.
 - Commercial dishwashers are preferred, but not required.
 - For commercial dishwashers, provide test strips to evaluate final rinse solution.
 - **NOTE:** *Commercial dishwashers use high heat or a chlorine-based solution (bleach) to sanitize dishes. Test strips are available for both and should be used on a weekly basis (or more) to ensure machines are working properly.*

- **When washing dishes in a three-compartment sink, fill each compartment as follows:**
 - Wash: warm/hot water and soap
 - Rinse: clean water
 - Sanitize: cool water and bleach. Prepare a solution using one teaspoon of bleach per gallon of water. If using other approved food service sanitizer (i.e. quaternary ammonium compounds) follow the labels instructions for preparation. The sanitizer solution should have a 30 second contact time prior to air drying.
 - **NOTE:** *Read the chemical's label for instructions on proper measurements and water temperature.*
 - Allow dishes and equipment to air dry. When washing dishes by hand, prepare a space, dish rack, or shelving unit for dishes to dry. Do not hand dry dishes using a cloth towel. If they must be dried immediately, use single-use paper towels. Ensure hands are washed and clean.

CLEANING AND SANITIZING NON-FOOD CONTACT SURFACES

Non-food contact surfaces include counters, tables, appliances, and other areas within the footprint of the food preparation/storage areas.

- **Clean surfaces** using a soap and water mixture or an approved kitchen cleaning solution.
- **Prepare a sanitizer solution** in a bucket or spray bottle. Label containers or color code them so it's clear to all staff what is inside.
- **If using a spray bottle, write this on the label:**

Sanitizing solution:

- How to Use: Spray surface and leave for 1-2 minutes. Dry with clean paper towel.
- How to Mix: 1/4 teaspoon of bleach with 4 cups of water.

WHEN TO CLEAN, AND WHEN TO USE A SANITIZER VS. A DISINFECTANT

- **Clean surfaces before sanitizing or disinfecting.** Sanitizers and disinfectants are less effective on dirty surfaces. It's important to clean first by vigorously scrubbing surfaces with soap or detergent.
- **Sanitize food and non-food contact surfaces.** Clean and sanitize food preparation areas at the end of each shift. Additionally, periodically sanitize high touch surfaces while the kitchen is in use (e.g., refrigerator and sink handles, soap dispensers, counters, etc.).
 - **DO NOT use a disinfectant on food and non-food contact surfaces.** Disinfectants are strong and should not be used within food preparation/storage areas, to protect those surfaces from chemical contamination.
- **Disinfect the facility, or rooms outside of the food preparation area.** Disinfect high touch surfaces (e.g., handles on bathroom sinks, toilets, doors, railings, electronics, counters, etc.) 2-5 times a day, or more depending on your operating hours and volume of visitors. Be sure to follow label instructions for required contact time and PPE.

PREPARING THE RIGHT SANITIZER AND DISINFECTANTS USING BLEACH

- **Sanitizer (for food, non-food, and facility surfaces)**
 - Mix 1 teaspoon of bleach with 1 gallon of water
- **Daily Disinfectant that kills COVID-19 (for facility use only)**
 - Mix 5 Tablespoons of bleach with 1 gallon of water
 - Use this mixture as a daily disinfectant to ensure COVID-19 is killed on surfaces at your site.
- **Special Disinfectant (for Norovirus, hepatitis A or blood, vomit, and human waste)**
 - Mix 1 cup of bleach with 1 gallon of water
 - Prepare this mixture when a confirmed or suspected hepatitis A case has visited or spent time at your site, and for disinfecting after a blood, vomit, or human waste spill.

SHELF LIFE OF BLEACH WATER SOLUTIONS

- Solutions added to **spray bottles must be remade every 24 hours**. *Use single-use paper towels with spray-bottle solutions and cleaning chemicals.*
- Solution prepared in **buckets must be remade every 2-4 hours, or when the water becomes cloudy**. *Use wiping cloths or single-use paper towels.*