

How to Choose Bleach for Use in a Retail Food Establishment

Household bleach is a common product used in retail food establishments. Not all bleach is the same, though, and many are not designed to be used to sanitize food contact surfaces. You must read the label to determine if the bleach is acceptable.

How do I know if my bleach is safe for sanitizing food contact surfaces?

- The label must contain instructions for use on food contact surfaces, dishes, and utensils.
- The label has an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registration number.
- The label instructs the user to allow the sanitized surface to “air dry”.

How do I know if my bleach is NOT safe to use for sanitizing food contact surfaces?

- The label states that it is scented (lemon, lavender, citrus, etc.)
- The label states that it is “splashless” or “low-splash”.
- The label has no instructions for sanitizing food contact surfaces.

DIRECTIONS FOR USE: It is a violation of Federal law to use this product in a manner inconsistent with its labeling. DO NOT use this product full strength for cleaning surfaces. Always dilute strictly in accordance with the directions. For prolonged use, wear gloves.				
For Laundry	Bleach	Water	Instructions	
To Brighten and Whiten Bleachable Fabrics <i>Avoid bleaching wool, silk, mohair, leather, spandex and non-fast colors</i>	1/3 Cup Max Line	Standard or HE Machine	1. Sort laundry by color. 2. Add detergent. 3. Fill bleach to max line or add bleach to wash water. 4. Add clothes.	
To Clean and Sanitize Bleachable Fabrics Laundry Sanitization Bacteria: <i>Klebsiella pneumoniae, Staphylococcus aureus</i>	1/2 Cup 1/4 Cup	Standard Machine HE Machine	1. Sort laundry by color. 2. Add detergent. 3. Fill bleach to max line or add bleach to wash water. 4. Add clothes. Ensure contact with bleach for 10 minutes.	
To Disinfect and Deodorize Hard, Nonporous Surfaces	Bleach	Water	Instructions	
For common household germs: <i>Escherichia coli</i> O157:H7 (E. coli), Methicillin-Resistant <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> (MRSA), <i>Salmonella enterica</i> (Salmonella), <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> (Staph), <i>Listeria monocytogenes</i> (Listeria), <i>Streptococcus pneumoniae</i> (Strep), H1N1 Influenza A Virus, Rhinovirus Type 14, Human Coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, ISARIS-Associated Coronavirus, EMERS (Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome-Associated Coronavirus (MERS-CoV))	1/3 Cup	1 Gal	Pre-wash surfaces, mop, wipe or spray with bleach solution. Allow surface to remain visibly wet for 6 minutes. Rinse well and air dry.	
For Hospital or Healthcare Disinfection: Hard, Nonporous Surfaces Kills <i>Staphylococcus aureus, Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i>	1/3 Cup	1 Gal	Pre-wash surfaces, mop, wipe or spray with bleach solution. Allow surface to remain visibly wet for 6 minutes. Rinse well and air dry. Prepare fresh solutions daily.	
This product is not to be used as a terminal sterilization level disinfectant on any surface or instrument that (1) is introduced directly into the human body, either into or in contact with the bloodstream or normally sterile areas of the body, or (2) contacts intact mucous membranes but does not ordinarily penetrate the blood barrier or otherwise enter normally sterile areas of the body. This product may be used to pre-clean or decontaminate critical or semicritical medical devices prior to sterilization or high level disinfection.				
For Preventing Odor-Causing Bacteria Growth for up to 48 Hours	Pre-cleaned hard, nonporous surfaces	1/3 Cup	1 Gal	Wipe or spray surface with bleach solution until thoroughly wet. Allow surface to air dry.
To Remove Mold and Mildew	Bleach	Water	Instructions	
Pre-cleaned hard, nonporous surfaces	1/3 Cup	1 Gal	Wipe or spray surface with bleach solution until thoroughly wet. Allow surface to air dry.	
To Sanitize Food-Contact Surfaces	Dishes, Glassware, Utensils, Plastic Cutting Boards, Baby Bottles Kills <i>Salmonella enterica, Escherichia coli</i> O157:H7	2 Tsp	1 Gal	Wash and rinse. Soak for 2 minutes in bleach solution, let air dry.
→ Kills SARS-CoV-2 on hard, nonporous surfaces. Δ On hard, nonporous surfaces. Allow product to air dry.				



Mixing your bleach solution: always read the label

Step 1: Mix your bleach with water (water temperature 55-75°F)

- 2 teaspoons of bleach per 1 gallon of water*
- 1/4 teaspoon of bleach per 1 quart of water*
- 1/8 teaspoon of bleach per 1 pint of water*

Step 2: Test your sanitizing solution with chlorine test strips to verify it is between 50-100 ppm.

* or as directed on label



Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
 Division of Food and Recreational Safety
 2811 Agriculture Drive, PO Box 8911, Madison, WI 53708
datcp.wi.gov