

## **Questions and Answers About Cleanup of Ebola in Non-Health Care Settings** *(This will be updated as new information or CDC guidance becomes available.)*

### **What is meant by a “non-health care setting”?**

Examples would include private homes, workplaces, public housing, public transportation, hotels and motels, restaurants, theaters, and other places where people gather. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has separate information for health care workers, hospitals, laboratories and other health care settings.

### **When would information apply about cleanup of Ebola-infected body fluids in a non-health care setting?**

This information **only** applies to a setting where there is a symptomatic person under investigation for Ebola virus disease (EVD), or a person with laboratory confirmed EVD.

<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/case-definition.html>

Agencies or authorities who oversee public transportation, workplaces or other public settings have cleaning and disinfection procedures in place. The cleanup information in this fact sheet will be most useful to members of the public concerned about contamination in home settings.

### **How can I be exposed to Ebola virus?**

Ebola is spread through direct contact (through broken skin or for example, through the eyes, nose, or mouth) with blood or other body fluids (such as feces, saliva, urine, vomit and semen) of a person who is sick with Ebola virus disease. Ebola is **not** spread through the air or by water.

### **How long does Ebola virus last in the environment?**

Viruses need a host to reproduce, so once outside the body, they become inactive over time. Ebola is known to be quite fragile and becomes inactive in the environment more quickly than many other viruses, such as, for example, norovirus (the “stomach bug”).

### **When is special cleaning and disinfection needed?**

Special cleaning and disinfection are needed when homes, public spaces and other non-health care settings are contaminated with blood or body fluids from a symptomatic person under investigation for Ebola virus disease (EVD) or a person with laboratory confirmed EVD.

Ebola can only be spread to others after symptoms begin. If a person is being watched for signs of illness because of direct contact to an Ebola patient, but has no symptoms, there is no need to do anything other than routine cleaning with household cleaners, such as soap or detergent. If that person develops a fever, but has no additional symptoms of vomiting or diarrhea before seeking treatment in a health care facility, cleaning and laundering can be done as usual.

### **What do I do if I need to clean and disinfect an area in my home that is contaminated with blood or other body fluids from a symptomatic person under investigation for Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) or a person with laboratory confirmed EVD?**

The best thing to do is hire a professional cleaning contractor. Work with your local health department to identify the contractors in your area that are trained to do this work. Click here to find contact information for your local health department or district office.

[http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/doh\\_pub\\_contacts\\_map.htm](http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/doh_pub_contacts_map.htm)

### **Why hire a professional cleaning contractor for a contaminated area in my home?**

There are several reasons to use a professional cleaning contractor:

- A professional cleaning contractor will know what items can be cleaned and what items cannot.
- A professional cleaning contractor will know the correct procedures for cleaning furnishings and household items contaminated with blood or other body fluids.
- A professional cleaning contractor will know which products should be used for cleaning and disinfecting surfaces contaminated with blood or other body fluids.
- A professional cleaning contractor will know how to properly handle, package and dispose of any items contaminated with blood or other body fluids.
- The contractor will know what kinds of cleaning practices NOT to use – such as steam cleaning, power washing or any practice that sprays droplets of infectious materials.
- And, most important, professional cleaning contractors will have the correct personal protective equipment (PPE) to ensure that they stay protected from infection when exposed to blood or other body fluids.

### **Who regulates professional cleaning contractors?**

As with all private employers in the United States, professional contractors must comply with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Bloodborne Pathogens, Hazard Communication and Personal Protective Equipment Standards and all other applicable regulations and standards including those pertaining to worker protection and waste handling.

### **What kind of cleanup is needed in areas that are visibly contaminated with Ebola-infected blood and other body fluids?**

The State Health Department is providing guidance for local health departments who may be asked to review cleanup plans. The guidance includes a multi-step procedure that starts with assessing and isolating contaminated areas. Workers wear personal protective equipment that includes, at a minimum, special waterproof gloves, a facemask that covers nose and mouth, goggles and face shield, waterproof coveralls, closed-toe shoes and shoe covers. Guidance also includes information on cleaning and disinfection products and how to dispose of waste materials.

### **Can I just ventilate my house? Would that get rid of the Ebola virus?**

No. The Ebola virus is not airborne.

### **Do I need to isolate the area in my home where the person was sick? How long before the area needs to be cleaned and disinfected?**

If a symptomatic person under investigation for Ebola virus disease (EVD) or a person with laboratory confirmed EVD contaminates an area with blood or other body fluids, access to the area should be restricted so no people or pets can enter. Any area that is visibly contaminated with blood or other body fluids should be cleaned and disinfected by a professional cleaning contractor as soon as possible.

### **Does the entire home need to be cleaned and disinfected or just the areas that were soiled?**

Only those areas that are visibly contaminated with blood or other body fluids need cleaning and disinfection by a professional cleaning contractor. For other areas, a professional contractor is not needed. Cleaning and laundering can be done as usual.

**Are special clothes needed to clean and disinfect Ebola-infected blood and body fluids?**

Absolutely! It is very important to have the right kind of personal protective equipment. Professional cleaning contractors will wear personal protective equipment that includes, at a minimum, special waterproof gloves, a facemask that covers nose and mouth, goggles and face shield, waterproof coveralls, closed-toe shoes and shoe covers. A professional contractor will know what specific kinds of gloves and masks are recommended.

**Is special cleaning and disinfection needed if family members are being monitored because they had contact with someone who was sick with Ebola?**

No. No special cleaning or disinfection is needed unless that person develops symptoms and visibly contaminates an area with blood or other body fluids. For people being monitored that have no symptoms, cleaning and laundering can be done as usual in any areas where they live, work or visit.

Category	Definition	Decontamination and Disposal	Training and PPE
Cleaning by residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residence where a person with Ebola only had a fever and no gastrointestinal (e.g., diarrhea, vomiting) and/ or no hemorrhagic (bleeding) symptoms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents can clean and launder as normal using detergent and/or disinfectant</li> <li>Residents can discard of waste as normal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No training required</li> <li>Follow detergent and disinfectant product manufacturer's instructions</li> </ul>
Cleaning by contract company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residence where a person with Ebola had a fever AND diarrhea, vomiting, and/or unexplained bleeding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members of the residence or property owners should NOT handle contaminated materials</li> <li>Contact local public health or assigned authorities</li> <li>Contract company should conduct decontamination and disposal procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contract company should follow local state policies, comply with OSHA standards, and federal guidelines as appropriate</li> </ul>

Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/residential-decontamination.html>.

**Where can I get more information about Ebola virus disease?**

Get the Facts About Ebola: New York State Department of Health

[http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/ebola/?utm\\_source=doh&utm\\_medium=hp-button&utm\\_campaign=ebola](http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/ebola/?utm_source=doh&utm_medium=hp-button&utm_campaign=ebola)

Ebola (Ebola virus disease): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html>