



BODILY FLUIDS

This toolbox talk describes good practice for clearing up body fluids – vomit, faeces, blood etc. It covers the key points you need to follow to help reduce exposure to an acceptable level.

Hazards

Body fluids are a source of infectious micro-organisms (bacteria, viruses and fungi). The main risk is infection following hand to mouth/nose/eye contact. There is also a risk of infection via broken skin (cuts or scratches). Cleaning products used may contain hazardous substances such as biocides and surfactants. Health effects from these cleaning products include irritation, dermatitis and breathing problems.

In order to effectively and safely clean up any bodily fluids you must consider the following:

Access and equipment

1. Erect barriers and notices.
2. Store cleaning products and materials in a designated area.
3. Provide dedicated cleaning equipment.
4. Chlorine-releasing disinfectant is suitable, eg hypochlorite solution.
5. Provide closeable containers and bags, labelled 'Clinical waste'.
6. Provide buckets with disinfectant and long-handled brushes for personal decontamination at the exit point.
7. Ensure a good standard of general ventilation.
8. Scrape up residues into the closeable container, for safe disposal.
9. Bag up contaminated material that needs laundry or disposal, eg bedding, clothing.
10. Wash surfaces clean with detergent before disinfecting.



11. Heavily fouled soft furnishings may need bagging for disposal as clinical waste.
12. Provide sterile wipes and clean water to cleanse wounds
13. Keep a supply of sterile adhesive waterproof dressings nearby.
14. Respiratory protective equipment (RPE) is not needed.
15. Provide eye protection – a full-face visor
16. Provide disposable coveralls with a hood.
17. Provide a disposable plastic apron.
18. Provide wellingtons or waterproof disposable overshoes.
19. Provide latex free waterproof, abrasion-resistant gloves, eg nitrile.
20. Ensure that all cuts and abrasions are covered with a waterproof dressing before work begins.

Cleaning and housekeeping

1. Assume that everything that we may come into contact with is contaminated.
2. Clean and disinfect the area after the task.
3. Use the 'buddy' system to decontaminate PPE and work clothing – minimise the spread of contamination.
4. Change out of work clothing before exiting the area.
5. Provide bags labelled 'Clinical waste – Biohazard' for all contaminated PPE.
6. Disinfect or sterilise reusable work equipment.
7. Ensure that waste from the cleaning of body fluids is disposed of safely according to local rules and regulations.
8. Caution: If soiled, bag up work clothes for laundry as a separate load.
9. Wash hands before eating or drinking, and after touching any surface or object that might be contaminated.
10. Provide warm water, mild skin cleansers, nailbrushes, and soft paper, fabric towels or hot air for drying. Avoid abrasive cleansers.
11. Instruct workers in how to clean their skin effectively



-
12. Provide pre-work skin creams, which will make it easier to wash dirt from the skin, and after-work creams to replace skin oils.
 13. Caution: 'Barrier creams' or 'liquid gloves' do not provide a full barrier.

Health surveillance

1. Conduct skin checks for dermatitis.
2. Keep good records of gastric upsets – monitor that personal hygiene is adequate.
3. Where appropriate, make available effective vaccines for those workers at risk of repeated exposure to body fluids, typically hepatitis B, or covid 19.

Training and supervision

1. Provide supervision – ensure that safe work procedures are followed.
2. Tell workers, including maintenance workers, what the hazards and risks are.
3. Explain the early signs of dermatitis.
4. Training includes toolbox talks on:
 - how to use the right safe working procedures;
 - checking for damage;
 - personal hygiene;
 - how to decontaminate effectively; and
 - what to do if something goes wrong.
5. Involve managers and supervisors in health and safety training.



Employee checklist	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are you clear about the procedures for doing the job?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clean up leaks and spills immediately.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Look for signs of wear and damage to equipment.
<input type="checkbox"/>	If you find any problem, get it fixed. Don't just carry on working.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Report all illnesses to your supervisor.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use, look after and store your PPE in accordance with instructions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wash hands before eating, drinking, before and after using the lavatory.