

Be Careful with Bleach!

Many of us are facing difficulties finding the disinfectants and cleaning supplies that are needed to ensure we have safe educational and working environments. Because of this, there may be a temptation to utilize bleach or bleach water to clean surfaces at schools. Bleach is one of the cleaning products that is reporting to be effective for COVID-19 preparation. It is important to remember that **bleach is corrosive to skin and eyes** and there are **additional regulations that apply** when using bleach and bleach water as a cleaner or disinfectant. Below are some important items to keep in mind when determining if bleach or bleach water is the correct disinfectant to use in your district.

Training Requirements

- Any employee using bleach or bleach water **must** be provided with proper training.
- Training **must** be documented

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Requirements

- Any employee using bleach or bleach water **must** have proper PPE, including:
 - Gloves
 - Wrap-around or chemical splash goggles

Mixing Process Requirements

- Bleach water **must** be mixed **daily** as it loses effectiveness with age, making it difficult to determine its germ killing properties.
- Bleach water **must** be mixed near an eyewash station (or within 10 seconds of an eyewash station) due to its corrosive nature
- Recommendations for bleach water solution:
 - 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) bleach per gallon of water *or*
 - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

Labeling Requirements

- All secondary containers, such as spray bottles, **must** be labeled according to GHS labeling requirements, including:
 - **Full** chemical name (no abbreviations)
 - Dilution
 - Any known hazards
 - Corrosive to skin and eyes

Disposal Requirements

- Any unused bleach water mixtures/solutions must be properly disposed of each night
 - As stated above, **bleach water loses its effectiveness with age, making it difficult to determine its germ killing properties.**
- The best practice is to dispose of any unused bleach water solutions at the end of the day

Due to the additional requirements that using bleach entails, it is recommended to consider an alternative to bleach and bleach water as a disinfectant solution. However, if you do choose to utilize bleach or bleach water, you will want to ensure that you are following the above requirements. If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to Kayla Speidel at Kayla.Speidel@swwc.org.