



Health & Hygiene in Evacuation Centers

Evacuation centers serve as temporary shelter for persons displaced from their homes following a disaster. Evacuation facilities vary depending on the location and the degree of damage caused by the event. Office buildings, sports stadiums, churches, residential homes, dormitories and community centers may all be used for emergency shelters. Evacuees are required to share living spaces, bathrooms and kitchen facilities with others and may also be exposed to overly crowded conditions. People exposed to these conditions are vulnerable to outbreaks of infectious diseases.

You can help prevent the spread of infection by taking the following steps.

Wash Hands!!! Use hot soap and water to wash your hands. Scrub for at least 15 seconds and don't forget to clean your fingernails and wrists. If soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand sanitizers can be used as an alternative.

When should you wash your hands?

- Before eating
- After using the bathroom
- After changing a diaper or assisting a child in the bathroom
- After handling uncooked foods (meat, poultry, or fish) **Note to food handlers – always wash your hands with soap and hot water. Alcohol hand gel should not be used as a substitute if soap and water are available.
- After caring for a sick person
- After blowing your nose, sneezing, or coughing
- After touching garbage
- After having contact with an animal or animal waste.

Practice good personal hygiene.

- **Don't share** personal items such as hair brushes, combs, razors, toothbrushes, or towels with anyone else.
- **Don't share** drinks or eating utensils.
- Use tissues to cover coughs and to blow the nose.

Maintain a clean living space.

- **Sanitize** high risk surfaces such as food preparation areas, diaper changing tables, and surfaces soiled with body fluid (blood, feces and vomitus). To sanitize, use 1 teaspoon of household bleach in 1 quart of clean water or any cleaning product with a label stating that it is a sanitizer.

- Clean all surfaces in the living area with a household detergent and at least once a week or more often if needed.
- Mattresses, bed frames and pillows should be cleaned and washed between occupants.
- Spills should be cleaned immediately.
- Kitchens and bathroom should be cleaned with a sanitizer several times a day, everyday!

- Both kitchens and bathroom need to be stocked with **paper towels and soap at all times!**
- Use trash cans lined with plastic bags that can be tied shut. All trash should be stored away from living areas and taken out before it begins to overflow. **Separate medical waste** (syringes and needles) from household waste for pickup. If a biohazard receptacle is not available a laundry detergent bottle can be used as long as it is properly labeled.

Written by Lisa Norman, September 29, 2005

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