

Pesticide Use After Floods



OREGON
DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE

In the aftermath of a flood, there are may still be many risks, so take steps to keep yourself and your family safe. Among them are the risk of harmful microorganisms carried by floodwaters. The following information outlines basic pesticide licensing and use requirements for those looking to disinfect surfaces that have come in contact with floodwaters.

PESTICIDE LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

You do not need a pesticide license to apply general use pesticides on property you or your employer owns or leases, unless it is on a school campus (as defined in ORS 634.700).

If you are a public employee, you can apply general use pesticides without a license as long as you are using application equipment that is not power-driven, like a hand-pump backpack sprayer. However, you do need a Public Pesticide Applicator license if you apply or supervising the application of any Restricted Use Pesticide (RUP), or any general use pesticide using power-driven application equipment. In that case, you also need the Industrial, Institutional, Health, and Structural: General Pest category.

A business or non-profit that advertises or provides pesticide application services to someone else's property, needs a Commercial Pesticide Operator license. Pesticide applicators employed by these businesses will need to have a Commercial Pesticide Applicator license with the category Industrial, Institutional, Health, and Structural: General Pest, to apply or supervise the application of any pesticide to someone else's property (private or public land)

You can check if an applicator or a business has an active pesticide license on the ODA website at <https://oda.direct/SearchPesticideLicenses>.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Reducing Pesticide Risk After a Disaster:
<https://npic.orst.edu/aftermath.html>

Why is it important to avoid mixing disinfectants and household chemicals? <https://oda.fyi/AvoidMixing>

Dangers of Mixing Bleach with Cleaners:
<https://oda.fyi/BleachMixingDangers>

Antimicrobials Fact Sheet: <https://oda.fyi/Antimicrobials>

Flood Cleanup to Protect Indoor Air and Your Health:
<https://oda.fyi/IndoorAir>

Home Safety and Reentry After a Flood:
<https://oda.fyi/HomeSafetyReentry>

Mold in Your Home: <https://oda.fyi/Mold>

Selecting an Antimicrobial:
<https://oda.fyi/AntimicrobialProductSelect>

Flood-Recovery Guidance for Lawns and Gardens:
<https://oda.fyi/FloodRecoveryLawn>

Sanitizer basics for the food industry:
<https://oda.fyi/SanitizerBasics>



CHOOSING A DISINFECTANT

You may choose to use a sanitizer or disinfectant product. These products are pesticides and must be registered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Registered sanitizers and disinfectants will have labels with “use” directions and an EPA Registration Number with two or three sets of digits (for example, 12345-67, or 12345-67-890). These products are available in many grocery stores and home improvement centers.

Review the label for specific locations, surfaces, or objects it may be used on. Generally, disinfectants reduce bacteria, fungi, and certain viruses on surfaces, and can be used on many hard, non-porous surfaces. This may include doorknobs, counters, showers, sinks, finished/sealed wood, and playground equipment. Sanitizers only reduce bacteria and can be used on many hard, non-porous surfaces.

Additionally, some sanitizers can be used on food contact surfaces such as counter tops or plastic cutting boards. Others may also be used on soft surfaces like upholstery or linens. Always check the product label to make sure it is labeled for the surfaces or objects you are sanitizing. Be aware that not all items can be successfully disinfected or sanitized. Some items may need to be thrown away.

- Before sanitizing or disinfecting, clean the object or surface with soap and water to remove any visible dirt or grime.
- Read the product label and follow the directions.

- Review the First Aid section so you are prepared if you get the product on your skin, in your eyes, or breathe it in.
- Wear any protective equipment, such as gloves, mask, or eye protection, required on the label.
- When using a product, always follow the dilution rate and application methods listed on the label. Some products are ready to use, while others need to be mixed with water. The label will also list how long the product must stay wet on the surface, which could be up to 10 minutes. This is called the contact time, and is the time required for the product to kill the microorganisms listed on the label. Sanitizers usually have a shorter contact time than disinfectants, but kill fewer microorganisms. Many products also require a rinse, especially for food contact surfaces, to remove any remaining product and prevent it from coming into contact with food.
- Some sanitizers and disinfectants contain bleach. Use these products according to their label directions. DO NOT mix bleach with other chemicals, such as ammonia, acids, other cleaners, or chemicals brought in by flood water. These mixtures can be toxic! Clean the area as much as you can with water and detergent before using other cleaners, sanitizers, or disinfectants.
- DO NOT use bleach on your lawn or garden.

For additional information, contact the Oregon Department of Agriculture Pesticides Program at pesticide-expert@oda.oregon.gov or 503.986.4635