

# SANITATION GUIDANCE FOR PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAYS AFTER SEWAGE-CONTAMINATED FLOW EVENTS

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## OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this document is to provide best practice guidance references for sanitizing public right-of-way (e.g. sidewalks, streets, and gutters) after a potential sewage-contaminated flood or flow event occurs.

## REGULATIONS

All sanitation procedures must adhere to local, state, and federal jurisdiction regulations, including [National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System](#) requirements, as well as any public notification regulations. In addition, all applicable safety precautions for all personnel involved in any cleanup efforts must be followed.

## HAZARD ASSESSMENT

During a flood or flow event, area closure signs should be posted to prevent the public from entering contaminated areas. After contaminated waters recede, they can leave behind dangerous bacteria from overflowing sewage and agricultural and industrial wastes. Avoid touching face, mouth, eyes, nose, or open sores and cuts while handling human waste or sewage as well as eating or drinking anything contaminated by floodwater. Wash skin and clothes that contacted contaminated floodwaters with clean water and soap or detergent. To mitigate health risks, perform a hazard assessment to identify any hazardous or otherwise unsafe conditions prior to conducting any sanitation activities. It is recommended that employees or contractors be properly trained for applicable occupational hazards (e.g., heat illness prior to performing sanitation procedures). Resources are available at:

- <https://www.osha.gov/flood/response>
- <https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OSHA3471.pdf>

Assess public right-of-ways affected and design a sanitation strategy tailored to the particular situation (i.e. road, sidewalk, park, trails, etc.). Identify characteristics of the area to be cleaned that will impact sanitation steps: permeable vs. impermeable surfaces, traffic, air flow, exposure to sunlight, impacted communities, downstream receivers, and others.

## SIGNAGE

Each jurisdiction should use warning signage to help prevent public contact with areas impacted by contaminated flows. The type of signage and its language may differ by the area (e.g., road, sidewalk, recreation area, etc.) and type of impact. Signage should be placed in a timely manner at locations that ensure the public is adequately informed (e.g., at all entry points to impacted areas), should include direction to avoid contact with contaminated flows, should remain in place until flows stop and after cleaning/disinfection has taken place, and if possible be translated to the primary language spoken for that community.

Signs should conform to any necessary and applicable standards (e.g., standards pertaining to signs on public roadways, etc.). References include the [California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control](#) which includes information on signage and gates to warn the public of flooded roads, including [W55 FLOODED](#) and [W86 FLOODING AHEAD TURN AROUND DON'T DROWN](#) signs. Additional [Caltrans sign specifications](#) can be used and could be supplemented with sewage impact warning information and precautionary statements for the public.

## SANITATION PROTOCOLS

Different sanitation techniques may be considered given the areas affected. This can include the use of disinfectants such as bleach or other products and/or removal of contaminated surfaces. Use only EPA-registered disinfectants and carefully consult the product label to ensure they are appropriate for the surfaces being disinfected and are consistent with the product's label use (e.g., hard surfaces such as sidewalks). Links to several sanitation procedures are provided here as guidelines and must be adapted to each individual situation.

[Guidelines for Cleaning Safely After a Disaster | Natural Disasters | CDC](#)

[Operation Healthy Streets \(OHS\) \(lacitysan.org\)](#)

[Sanitation Procedures for Public Right-of-Ways](#)

## SELECTED REFERENCES

These additional resources may further assist in developing individual agency sanitation protocols.

### **Disinfectants**

[California Product/Label Database Application](#)

[Selected EPA-Registered Disinfectants | US EPA](#)

### **Regulations**

[California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control](#)

[National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System \(NPDES\) | US EPA](#)

### **Safety**

[Bloodborne Pathogens - Worker protections against occupational exposure to infectious diseases | Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(osha.gov\)](#)

[Floods | Ready.gov](#)

[Floodwater Safety Tips | Cal OES News](#)

[Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response \(HAZWOPER\) | Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(osha.gov\)](#)

[Pressure Washer Safety | Natural Disasters | CDC](#)

[Sanitary Sewer Overflow \(SSO\) Frequent Questions | US EPA](#)