

Inspection Report Item 5:  
**Procedures for responding to vomiting and diarrheal events**  
Code Reference: FDA Food Code 2-501.11

A FOOD ESTABLISHMENT shall have written procedures for EMPLOYEES to follow when responding to vomiting or diarrheal events that involve the discharge of vomitus or fecal matter onto surfaces in the FOOD ESTABLISHMENT. **The procedures shall address the specific actions EMPLOYEES must take to minimize the spread of contamination and the exposure of EMPLOYEES, consumers, FOOD, and surfaces to vomitus or fecal matter.**

Having a **written plan** for clean up can help reduce the likelihood that food may become contaminated and that others may become ill because of the incident.

According to the CDC, Norovirus is the leading cause of foodborne disease outbreaks in the United States. Consumers are at risk of contracting Norovirus illness from direct exposure to vomit or from exposure to airborne Norovirus from vomit. Additionally, exposed food employees are also at risk of contracting Norovirus illness and can subsequently transfer the virus to ready-to-eat food items served to consumers.

Effective clean up of vomit and fecal matter in a food establishment should be handled differently from routine cleaning procedures. It should involve a stricter cleaning and disinfecting process. Some chemicals that are usually used for sanitizing food-contact surfaces and disinfecting countertops and floors, such as certain quaternary ammonium compounds, may not be effective against Norovirus.

A written clean up and response procedure should address situations where a food employee or other individual becomes physically ill in areas where food may be prepared, stored or served. Once an episode has occurred, timely effective clean up is imperative.

**When developing a written plan that addresses cleaning and disinfection of a vomitus and/or diarrheal contamination event, a food establishment should have specific directions for cleanup that are specific to their facility and should answer:**

- 1) **When** will a Clean-up plan will be implemented?
- 2) **What** cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment are needed? (Disposable items are best.)
- 3) **Who** should clean up an incident? *(This should not be someone directly involved in food prep or service.)*
- 4) **How** will surfaced that may have become contaminated be cleaned and disinfected?  
*(Bleach solutions are recommended, and items that cannot be bleached should be steam cleaned.)*
- 5) **What** will be done with open or exposed food and food equipment?
- 6) **How** will employees be trained on the proper use of personal protective equipment and the procedures to follow in containing, cleaning, and disinfecting a contaminated area?
- 7) **How** will the affected area be blocked off and contained to minimize the exposure of employees, customers and others in the facility to the surfaces or food that may have become contaminated? *(It is recommended that a 25 foot radius of the incident be cleaned and sanitized).*
- 8) **What** procedures are in place for employee hygiene and disposal of personal protective equipment and discharges, including airborne particles? *(Include procedures in the event that an employee comes in direct contact with infected discharges.)*
- 9) **How** will an effective Employee Health policy and effective Clean-up procedures help minimize the risk of disease transmission in your facility?