

## **Bleach and Washer Cleaner Use in Laundry**

### **General Plan/Approach:**

This procedure presents instructions for the use of chlorine bleach in laundry operations.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), a US government agency, tests if a product kills germs and checks if it poses unreasonable health hazards. Only products with EPA registration numbers on the label can make public health claims. If a product is not registered as a sanitizer or disinfectant with the EPA, it can only be relied on for cleaning and not for killing germs. The chlorine bleach we will use as a sanitizer must be an EPA registered pesticide. It is a violation of federal law to use this product in a manner inconsistent with its labeling.

Bleach can irritate the lungs and mucous membranes. It can damage skin, eyes and clothing. For staff who mix bleach solutions, contact with full strength bleach can be harmful. Exposure of children to bleach hazards is highly unlikely as children are prohibited from entering laundry areas.

#### **Oregon OSHA:**

**OAR 437-002-1910.1200(h)** Health hazard criteria

#### **Oregon Health Authority:**

Criteria for Disinfectants and Sanitizers 12/21/2014

### **Procedures:**

All staff must read the Safety Data Sheet and the EPA label for chlorine bleach. If there are any questions or uncertainties regarding its use, please contact your supervisor or the SOHS Safety Compliance Manager. These use directions do not replace the use directions on the label. They are only repeated here to help users understand them.

### **Bleach Use:**

#### **A. General Information**

1. Bleach will be used to sanitize smelly, moldy cleaning wipes mop heads, and the washing machine. If there are unusual circumstances where

something will be laundered that is contaminated with body fluids, bleach can be used for disinfection (follow label instructions for disinfection). Don't use bleach in laundry operations when children are present if your machines are in a classroom or very close location where children may be exposed to bleach fumes.

2. An eyewash station is required to be available in any area where bleach is used in laundry for emergency use if bleach gets in someone's eyes.
3. Ventless safety goggles and vinyl or nitrile gloves are required to be worn when mixing/diluting bleach for use.
4. Make sure the room is well-ventilated.
5. Laundry Use:
  - a. Add 4.5 fluid ounces to 10 gallons of water to yield a diluted solution of about 200 ppm in the machine.
  - b. Wait five minutes then add detergent and start the wash/rinse cycle.
  - c. If the machine has an automatic bleach dispenser use it.

***\*Never mix or store ammonia with bleach or products that contain bleach.***

#### B. Cleaning and Sanitizing the Washing Machine

1. Use hot water.
2. Select the "extra rinse" option.
3. Add Clorox® Regular Bleach to the bleach dispenser. Use ½ cup or fill the dispenser to the "max fill" line.
4. Run the cycle.
5. Be sure you run an extra rinse cycle to ensure that no bleach is left behind. If this is not an option on your washer, then after the cycle you selected runs to completion, manually select a rinse cycle and start the washer again.
  - i. Washing machines need to be cleaned and sanitized several times a year to prevent odors and to remove sludge. To clean and sanitize your clothes washer, you can run a clean-out cycle; you may perform this function manually.
  - ii. Remember: Do not put laundry in the washer when cleaning the machine.

- iii. Also, if your washer doesn't have a bleach dispenser, then begin by selecting a hot water cycle (and an extra rinse cycle), and start the washer. Once you have a little water in the bottom of the tub, you can add ½ cup Clorox® Regular Bleach directly to the washer tub and then restart the washer.

#### C. Storage and Disposal

1. Store these chemicals in a cabinet or room secured with a lock or child-proof latch. Disposal is usually not necessary – use all of the product in each container. “Bleach expires 6 months after purchase. Empty product containers are non-refillable and may be placed in trash bags and put in the trash.