



CleaningMatters

Tips and Trends from the American Cleaning Institute®

November/December 2011

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Calendar of Clean

November is ...

- **Daylight Savings Time Ends: Nov. 6**
- **Veterans Day: Nov. 11**
- **Great American Smokeout: Nov. 17**
(See Soot-free for Santa)
- **Thanksgiving: Nov. 24**
(See Ask Nancy!/Tell Nancy!)

December is ...

- **National Handwashing Awareness Week: Dec. 4-10**
(See Ask Nancy!/Tell Nancy!)
- **Healthy Schools, Healthy People, It's a SNAP Deadline: Dec. 1**
- **National Cookie Day: Dec. 4**
(See Ask Nancy!/Tell Nancy!)
- **New Year's Eve: Dec. 31**
(See Soot-free for Santa)

After the Emergency

What to Do When Water Has Been Everywhere

From torrential downpours to broken pipes to leaky roofs, when water invades your home, the damage can be swift and brutal. Mold growth and food contamination are two major concerns.

Your very first step should be to pick up the phone and call your insurance agent and report the water damage. Best-case scenario is to do this within 24 hours. Your insurance broker should be able to recommend a contractor with experience in repairs and mold removal. Your house and furnishings are less likely to grow mold if they are dried within 48 hours, so prompt attention is imperative.

Severe water damage definitely requires the help of outside specialists. And some difficult decisions may have to be made as to which items can be salvaged and cleaned and which ones will need to be discarded. Floodwater may carry silt, raw sewage, oil or chemical wastes that can cause a whole range of bacterial, viral and/or parasitic diseases. Check with local authorities to determine how to dispose of household items that have been contaminated by sewage or that have been wet for an extended period of time. Some localities may have regulations and specific procedures for bagging, tagging and disposing of contaminated items.

Consider all water unsafe until you have checked with your local health department. This includes water used for drinking, cooking and cleaning.

Food Stuffs

Throw away fresh foods and pantry-type foods that have come in direct contact with the water. This includes unopened foods in glass containers, such as mayonnaise and salad dressing, and canned foods.



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www.cleaninginstitute.org
info@cleaninginstitute.org

After the Emergency (cont.)

What to Do When Water Has Been Everywhere

Food in glass containers may look safe, but there is currently no lid in use that will keep out water if the container has come in contact with floodwaters. Canned-goods containers may develop rust. Paper labels on both glass and can containers can be magnets for bacteria and other contaminants in floodwaters. Also dispose of containers with cork-lined or waxed cardboard tops, pop-tops, peel-off tops or paraffin seals; food in cardboard boxes; flexible containers, including cloth, paper, foil and cellophane; canned goods; staples stored in canisters; and any unopened containers.

Kitchen Surfaces

Kitchen counters, pantry shelves, refrigerators, stoves, dishes and glassware that have come in contact with water should be thoroughly washed with warm water and soap, rinsed and then disinfected. To disinfect, use a solution of $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of water. Keep the surfaces wet for two minutes, then rinse with clean water.

Wood and plastic items, including cutting boards, utensils and food storage containers, that have been in contact with contaminated water should be discarded because they may harbor bacteria, which makes them difficult to clean and disinfect.

Laundry

Wet textiles are the perfect breeding ground for mold and mildew, warns Nancy Bock, Vice President of Consumer Education at the American Cleaning Institute® (ACI). As soon as the floodwaters recede or the leak is stopped and the water has been removed, the next priority is to clean clothes and other water-soaked fabrics.

Although your first instinct may be to wash these items in very hot water, high water temperatures may set any stains that have developed. Prewash first, using cool water and powdered laundry detergent. These detergents are particularly effective on clay and ground-in dirt. To help remove protein stains, such as sewage, grass or blood, add an enzyme presoak product to the prewash. Other heavy soils, such as oil-based stains including animal fats, body soils, cooking oils, cosmetics and motor oils, should be treated with a prewash stain remover.

Wash the items using a powdered laundry detergent and the hottest water that's safe for the fabric. If they have come in contact with sewage, it is important to add a disinfectant to the wash. Use liquid household bleach (sodium hypochlorite), following the cleaning product label directions. If chlorine bleach is not suitable for the fabric, or if your water contains a large amount of iron, use a color-safe oxygen bleach. Since color-safe bleach does not disinfect, you will also need to add a disinfectant product to the laundry. You can identify these products by the EPA registration number that is displayed on the label. This number assures that the product has met EPA requirements for disinfectants. Follow label directions to get disinfection.

For more information about washing, download the tip sheet, "[Tips on Cleaning Flood-Soiled Fabrics](#)" developed by ACI.

ACI Clean Homes . . . Safe and Healthy Families Award Recipients

The Clean Homes . . . Safe and Healthy Families Award of Excellence honors outstanding educational programming efforts conducted by an Extension Educator (individual or team) who utilizes any of the American Cleaning Institute® (ACI) educational materials.

This year's award recipients are Linda K. Beech, county extension agent, Kansas State University Cooperative Extension, and Darlene A. Christensen, associate professor, Utah State University. They each received a \$500 cash award and the opportunity to present their award-winning program during the recent 2011 National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS) Annual Session in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Helping Newcomers Keep House

Linda K. Beech, county extension agent, Kansas State University Cooperative Extension, earned the award for presenting six sessions of "Home Care for New Kansans" for 74 Burmese, Somali and Spanish speakers and "A Home of My Own" for college students.

Finney County, Kansas, is a culturally diverse community created by immigrants who have come to work in the beef-packing plants in Garden City. The recent arrival of refugees from war-torn lands such as Somalia and Burma has resulted in newcomers struggling with unfamiliar home surfaces, appliances and cleaning products. The Finney County Extension collaborated with several local organizations, including Finney County Center for Children and Families, Kansas Social and Rehabilitation Services and the Garden City Community College (GCCC) Refugee Program, to develop a program to help these new arrivals. Six sessions of "Home Care for New Kansans" were presented in March through July of 2011 – two with a Burmese translator, two with a Somali translator and two with a Spanish translator. The program reached 74 participants from Burma, Somalia, Ecuador, Guatemala, El Salvador and Mexico. One session, "A Home of My Own," was presented to students enrolled in the GCCC Refugee Program. A simple verbal pre-test and post-test were used to develop rapport, gain insight into audience needs and assess learning. The program drew on many resources, including [ACI's Product Fact Sheet: Hard Surface Hygiene](#).

"These home care classes produced many benefits in our community," says Linda. "New audiences received helpful information. The collaborative planning partnership has



(Left to right) Darlene A. Christensen, NEAFCS president Marsha Lockard and Linda K. Beech.

opened doors to other opportunities, and while this outreach to nontraditional audiences stretched my comfort zone in many ways, it helped me grow as a better Extension professional and improved my ability to be an advocate and a liaison between our traditional community and some of its newest members."

A Handwashing Message for Kids

Darlene A. Christensen, associate professor, Utah State University, earned the award for conducting "It's in Your Hands," a yearlong handwashing campaign brought to children and families county-wide. Focusing on low-income and underserved families, the program included coloring contests and school visits. Throughout the year, more than 10 handwashing events or activities were held in various communities within Tooele County. The campaign was partially instigated by an outbreak of pinworm in one of the low-income local elementary schools. Working with a concerned mother, Darlene approached the school principal and implemented handwashing education. Classroom presentations and a follow-up bulletin-board contest were the focal points of the program. Supportive materials included ACI's [Hooray for Handwashing](#) and [Don't Do the Flu](#) coloring sheets.

In addition to a collection of volunteers, Darlene worked with Tooele County Relief Services, Boys and Girls Club, Tooele City Services, Harris Elementary School, Ibapah Goshute Indian Reservation Elementary School and Walmart.

"After handwashing programming efforts at Harris Elementary, the students started washing their hands so much more that the janitor complained to the principal that he needed a bigger budget for paper towels and soap," reports Darlene. "The principal agreed to the budget increase and told him it was critically important that the kids get to wash their hands when they need."

The resources used in these award-winning projects and more are available online at http://www.cleaninginstitute.org/clean_living/publication_catalog.aspx.



Better Living for Consumers

An Update from the Cleaning Products Industry



Nancy Bock

The American Cleaning Institute® (ACI) is proud of its strong relationship with the [National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences](#), and recently conducted an in-depth workshop during their 2011 Annual Session in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Extension professionals from New York, Maine, Texas, Kansas, Alabama, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, New Mexico, Alaska, Michigan and Mississippi participated in the workshop, and approximately 93% of the workshop attendees reported that they would recommend ACI and its educational materials and programs to others.



Suzette Middleton and Martin Wolf

Suzette Middleton (The Procter & Gamble Company), Martin Wolf (Seventh Generation) and Nancy Bock (ACI) represented the cleaning-products industry and shared information about product innovation and performance, sustainability, product packaging, product labels, and logos and certifications. Participants also learned more about ACI's free educational materials and resources.

The 4½-hour workshop also included hands-on activities and generated lots of questions and interest in future educational workshops. Watch future issues of *Cleaning Matters* for information about free educational webinars!

Soot-free for Santa

Ways to Get Rid of Smoke and Soot

Whether it's getting that chimney clean for Santa's descent, sitting by a cozy fire to welcome in the New Year or using candles to warm up your holiday décor, smoke and soot can be unwanted guests in your home during the holiday season. Nancy Bock, Vice President of Consumer Education at the American Cleaning Institute®, offers some suggestions for keeping the soot from getting under foot.

Preseason Chimney Check

To keep Santa's suit clean and keep your home and family safe, your chimney should be inspected yearly. The National Fire Protection Association Standard 211 says, "Chimneys, fireplaces and vents shall be inspected at least once a year for soundness, freedom from deposits, and correct clearances. Cleaning, maintenance, and repairs shall be done if necessary." This is the national safety standard; it takes into account the fact that even if you don't use your chimney much, animals may build nests in the flue or there may be other types of deterioration that make the chimney unsafe to use. The Chimney Safety Institute of America (CSIA), a nonprofit, educational organization dedicated to chimney and venting system safety, has a website that includes a list of CSIA-certified professionals. To find one near you, visit www.csia.org.

Smoke Out the Smoke

If you forget to open the damper, smoke will quickly billow out into the room. Opening the damper will stop the problem, but the smoke odor will probably linger. Open up the windows and let the fresh air in. Vacuum the floor and carpet, window treatments, upholstery

and lamp shades. Then spray fabric refresher on all the fabric surfaces.

Smooth surfaces, such as mirrors, floors and wood furniture, are repositories for smoke residue. Use a surface-appropriate cleaner to get rid of the residue. Don't forget to clean the light bulbs when they are cool. They not only attract smoke, but every time they are turned on, the heat releases the smoke odor back into the air.

Candles in the Wind

Candle groupings are lovely to look at, but they can create an excess of soot that clings to surrounding surfaces. Candles that are subject to a draft, that are too close to an adjoining surface, or that didn't have the wicks trimmed before lighting can also create soot problems. Don't try to rub the soot off, as that may smear it around, causing bigger problems. Instead, the first step is to vacuum off the surface soot, using the brush attachment. If candle soot is a frequent problem, invest in a dry-cleaning sponge. Made of natural rubber, this chemically impregnated sponge scoops up and absorbs dirt and soot into its pores. It is used dry. Do not wring out the sponge with water or clean it, as this will ruin the chemical treatment. If you don't own a sponge or if any residue remains after using the sponge, clean the area with a surface-appropriate cleaner.

Most candles use paraffin wax, which is made from petroleum products and emits soot. To avoid this problem in the future, consider using candles made from soy or beeswax.



Who Is ACI?

Providing Credible Resources for Our Partners and Consumers

The American Cleaning Institute® (ACI) is a trade association that represents producers of household, industrial and institutional cleaning products, their ingredients and finished packaging; oleochemical producers; and chemical distributors to the cleaning-product industry.

ACI helps keep you and your family clean, safe and healthy at home, work and school by collaborating with organizations like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the [American Society of Microbiology](#) to provide science-based educational resources and information. ACI also partners with [Family, Career and Community Leaders of America](#) and [National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences](#) and others who help share messages with their members and clients about cleaning, health and hygiene, and the safe and proper use of cleaning products used to clean hands, dishes, laundry and surfaces such as countertops and floors.

Important initiatives this fall include:

- **Clean the World.** ACI is a Silver Sponsor for the Inaugural Gala for [Clean the World](#), an organization committed to reducing the waste created by discarded soap and shampoo products and preventing the millions of deaths caused by hygiene-related illnesses around the world.
- **Healthy Schools, Healthy People, It's a SNAP!** (School Network for Absenteeism Prevention) program is a joint initiative of CDC and ACI. This program seeks to improve hand-hygiene habits to help prevent the spread of infectious disease

To learn more about ACI, check out the video [We Are the American Cleaning Institute](#).

Find out more about [ACI's partnerships](#) and friends.

and reduce related absenteeism. This grassroots, education-based effort can help improve health by making hand-cleaning an integral part of the school day. Now open to all public/private K-12 schools in states, territories and tribes within the U.S., schools can use the resources and ideas on the [Healthy Schools, Healthy People, It's a SNAP](#) website to create their own handwashing project, activity or campaign. **December 1st** is the deadline to apply for national recognition, which includes a cash award of \$5,000 and all-expense-paid trip for three to Washington, DC. For more information, visit www.itsasnap.org.

- **Back to School Clean Hands Week Webinar.** Promoting good hand hygiene is an ongoing need. Earlier this fall, experts from ACI, CDC, Education and Health Professions presented a webinar with up-to-date information about handwashing that helps others raise the awareness of the importance of hand hygiene in homes, schools, communities and the workplace. If you missed it, you can view the recording by visiting http://www.cleaninginstitute.org/clean_living/back_to_school_clean_hands_webinar.aspx



Helping Hands at the Holidays

Getting Everyone on Board with Proper Dosage

With family and friends descending for the holidays, the number of helping hands in your household will (hopefully!) increase. But as dishes and laundry pile up, you may need to give those helpers a bit of direction. Not everyone understands the importance of reading the cleaning-product labels and using the proper dosage, which means using the correct amount of product for the job at hand.

In particular, when it comes to dishwashing detergent and laundry products, many people tend to guess about how much product to use and don't give any thought to the consequences of using too much or too little. In the dishwasher, too little detergent means that the dishes, glassware and utensils don't come out clean, but instead, if your water is hard, with film and spots on them. Still-dirty items will need to be rewashed by hand or put back into the dishwasher for another cleaning cycle. Too much detergent can also leave a

film over everything. Over time, if you consistently use too much detergent, it can damage the machine.

In the case of laundry, using too much detergent can make your clothes stiff and dingy. In addition, overdosing may require that consumers repeat the wash cycle. For consumers who are working to be more environmentally conscious, this can defeat the purpose and cause more water and energy to be used. .

So, with extra hands on board, take time to be sure that everyone knows how to use your cleaning products for maximum results. The best way to do this is to encourage them to read and follow the product manufacturer's recommendations to determine how much product they should use, says Nancy Bock, Vice President of Consumer Education at the American Cleaning Institute®. No one wants to waste product, energy or water, but sometimes they need someone to show them the way!

Tea Stains and Chalky Residue, Begone

Eco-friendly Developments That Keep Dishes Sparkling

Because of its ability to prevent unsightly scale by trapping water-hardening calcium and magnesium ions, phosphate is a chelating agent that has long been a valued component of dishwashing detergent. Chelating agents literally take a tight grip on calcium and magnesium ions, which would otherwise leave scale on washed dishes. But, as helpful as they are in getting your dishes clean, phosphates may have had a significant downside. They are important plant nutrients that, when present in large amounts in wastewater, encourage extreme algae growth, which in turn disrupts the ecological balance in lakes and rivers. Even though, since the 1980s, progressively stricter phosphate standards have been able to control this phenomenon, manufacturers continue to seek out an alternative.

One of the most exciting alternatives is the development of new organic chelating agents that can replace phosphates. They are effective and safe – serving as a trapping agent for hardness ions, while also being biodegradable.

Over the years, dishwashing detergents have become increasingly more effective. In addition to chelating agents, they contain surfactants that make grease water-soluble and enhance the water runoff from the dishes; amylases – natural digestive enzymes that break up the chain molecule of starch, removing it from dishes; proteases – also natural digestive enzymes that take care of protein foods, like dried egg yolk and meat residue; and bleaching agents that remove colored stains, such as those left by tea and coffee.

And for anyone who thinks that washing dishes by hand is a better ecological alternative, Nancy Bock, Vice President of Consumer Education at the American Cleaning Institute®, points to a study conducted by the Institute of Household Technology of Bonn University. After taking a close look at people's dishwashing habits, the study observed that modern dishwashers now consume about 2.7 gallons of water and well below one kilowatt-hour of energy per wash cycle. These favorable consumption values are practically impossible to achieve when washing dishes by hand. In addition, most automatic dishwashers save about an hour's time per day, which adds up to almost 50 working days a year.



Ask Nancy

Tell Nancy



We'd love to hear more from our readers! Ask Nancy for help to solve your problem for [clean surfaces](#), [dishes](#), [laundry](#) and [hands](#). Or tell Nancy how you solved your cleaning crises or dirty dilemma. Write something on our [Facebook](#) wall, direct message us on [Twitter](#), or send an email to education@cleaninginstitute.org.

Q: Our family really loves pumpkin – pumpkin pie, pumpkin bread, pumpkin soup have all been part of our Thanksgiving meal. Inevitably, we get pumpkin stains on our tablecloth and the cloth napkins we reserve for special dinners. How do I get these stains out?

A: Scrape off any excess pumpkin and then flush under cold water to loosen the stain. Pretreat with a prewash stain remover. Launder in the hottest water that's safe for the fabric, using chlorine bleach, if safe for the fabric, or oxygen bleach.

Fresh stains are easier to remove, so if you're too tired after a holiday meal to pay much attention to laundry, pretreat the items with a prewash stain remover, toss them in the washing machine with laundry detergent and the type of bleach that's safe for the fabric, and let everything soak overnight.

Q: My kids love the Cookie Monster, and he inspired them to help me make holiday cookies. But our cookie decorating sessions always end up with food coloring stains on their clothes. How do I remove them?

A: If you treat the stains as soon as the decorating session is over, they will be easier to remove.

Start by sponging the stain with cold water to remove as much of the food coloring as possible. Then pretreat with a prewash stain-remover and launder. If the stain remains, mix a solution of 1/4 cup of chlorine bleach, if safe for the fabric, or 1/4 cup of oxygen bleach per gallon of cool water, and soak for at least 30 minutes. Rinse, and then launder.

Don't forget to have your kids wash their hands – both before the decorating begins and again anytime they take a break. It not only helps reduce transferring food-coloring stains to their clothing, but it will also help keep germs off the cookies.

To encourage kids to wash their hands during the holidays, the American Cleaning Institute® (ACI) has created Clean Your Paws for Santa Claus, a downloadable coloring sheet with handwashing tips. Download the flyer at www.cleaninginstitute.org/assets/1/AssetManager/SantaPaws2010.pdf and have your children decorate and display it on your refrigerator during the holidays to remind everyone in the family about the importance of good hand hygiene. And they can show off their coloring skills to the rest of the world! Just scan and email their finished coloring sheets to nbock@cleaninginstitute.org so that we can add their artwork to the gallery on the ACI website at www.cleaninginstitute.org/clean_living/clean_your_paws_for_santa_claus_art_gallery.aspx.

Nancy Bock is Vice President of Consumer Education at the American Cleaning Institute®



Clean Ideas Here's to Greener Holidays!

Twelve Ways to a Sustainable Season

Although it wouldn't be the holiday season without a bit of excess, just a little thoughtful effort and imagination can keep the celebration high and the environmental impact low.

1. A real tree can be a more sustainable option than an artificial tree. Because the latter is often made from petroleum products (PVC), when discarded, an artificial tree ends up in a landfill, where the plastic content makes it last forever. A real tree, on the other hand, can be turned into mulch, which protects plantings and returns the tree to Mother Earth.
2. Instead of a large cut tree, consider a smaller, live potted tree. Depending on your circumstances, you may be able to reuse the tree for two or three years without having to plant it or re-pot it. Once it gets too tall or too heavy for indoor use at the holidays, plant it outside.
3. In a household where someone suffers from allergies or asthma, an artificial tree may be a better choice because it doesn't have the allergens of a real tree. To insure a longer life for this type of tree, follow the tree manufacturer's instructions for removing dirt and dust. Invest in a storage bag or bin so that when the season is over, the tree can be stored in a dust-free environment.
4. When doing your holiday shopping, take along some canvas tote bags so you can leave the paper and plastic shopping bags in the store.
5. Switch from standard holiday lights to the new, longer-lasting, lower-energy-use LED lights. Visit www.earth911.com to find out how to recycle your old strings of holiday lights. There are programs that remove and recycle the copper, glass and plastic these lights contain.
6. Stock up on cleaning supplies so you don't run out during the busy holiday season. Take advantage of the concentrated products that are on the market. It's the greener alternative because a little bit of product goes a long way and you're using less packaging while getting more cleaning power.
7. Some of the best gifts don't come from a store! Consider gift certificates redeemable for activities that draw on your talents, time or energy – like cooking a meal, cleaning the car inside and out, organizing the garage, or doing the laundry once a week for several months. Busy moms and dads, as well as older relatives who have more than enough “stuff,” will be particularly appreciative.
8. Wrap green. Avoid foil or metallic wrapping papers, as they are difficult to recycle. Instead, look for eco-friendly gift wrap made from recycled paper. When unwrapping large gifts, save the paper for reuse; it can often be cut down for smaller presents. Creased wrapping paper can be ironed flat. And if you keep the use of adhesive tape to a minimum, more of the wrapping paper will be reusable.
9. Ribbons and bows are ultimately destined for the garbage bin. So give them as many lives as you can before they are trash-bound. Fabric ribbon, in particular, can be ironed and reused many times.
10. When the festivities are over, make sure all glass, plastic and aluminum containers from your holiday cheer go into the recycling bin. If your entertaining calls for plastic utensils, buy the thicker, more expensive versions. They are actually dishwasher safe, so you can reuse them many times before disposing them in the recycle bin. In the long run, this makes them a more economical choice and better for the environment than the cheaper versions.
11. Hold off on running the dishwasher until it is full. Frequent small loads wastes detergent, water and energy.
12. Keep stain sticks and stain wipes in convenient locations around the house so that even if the laundry has to pile up, stains can be treated promptly. This will help preserve those special holiday items so you can enjoy them again next year.

