HOW TO CLEAN DISHES WITH WATER CLEANING STATIONS

The main purpose of the water cleaning stations is to be environmentally friendly. The whole setup is designed to conserve water and energy while maintaining healthy and clean conditions. Note that requirements for dishwashing may differ between states. It is recommended that you review the requirements for your state.

Items required:
1 Brush for cleaning dishes (sponges and wash cloths are subject to quickly spreading microorganisms)
3 pairs of gloves
Tongs
1 large Strainer
Eco-friendly dish soap
Eco-friendly dish sanitizer [eco-friendly commercial sanitizer; homemade sanitizer (3 parts water to 1 part vinegar)]
A set of dish towels
3 buckets/tubs (18 gallon size or depending upon the volume and quantity of dishes)
1 Trash can
Drying Rack
1 table (to serve as a support for the buckets/tubs)
5 volunteers at the stations (1 for scrapping dishes, 3 next to buckets, 1 next to drying rack) + couple other volunteers to oversee the station needs
Aprons for cleaning station volunteers (optional)

Setting-up the station (in order):
• Survey the event site to select a location that is easily accessible to water supply
• Set out 1 trash can where the line will begin
• Set out three (3) buckets/tubs in the order below:
  o Wash bucket: contains hot water with a couple of squirts of biodegradable soap. Use minimum water, about 20 – 30% water by the volume of the bucket as the wash bucket water gets dirty quickly.
  o Rinse bucket: clear, hot water recommended (if hot water is not available, alternative would be cold water). Use 20 – 30% water by the volume of the bucket
  o Cold-rinse bucket (or Sanitizer Bucket): cold water with a tiny splash of biodegradable (or homemade chlorine free) sanitizer to kill bacteria;
    Notes: Avoid chlorine bleach; if using eco-friendly commercial sanitizer, mix 1 tablespoon of sanitizer per 1 gallon of cool water; if using homemade sanitizer (vinegar-water solution), mix 3 parts cool water to 1 part vinegar (distilled white vinegar - 5% acidity).
• Set out dish rack with a set of dish towels next to sanitizer bucket.

Notes: For sanitary reason, sanitization is mandatory in hand-washing in public food facilities. It is necessary to sterilize dishes in order to prevent the spread of microorganisms, especially in large events, where dishes are shared among many and at multiple times.

Washing Process:
1. Trash Can: Scrape all the large pieces of food on the dishes into the compost bin or trash can before washing. Wipe them clean to get most of the food particles off to avoid polluting wash water too fast.
2. Wash Bucket: Using gloves, wash/scrub the dishes in the wash bucket.

   Notes: Warm soapy water makes it a little easier to get the dishes clean, but cold water works too. There should be just enough dish detergent to form soapsuds on top of the water. If the water looks murky or doesn’t have soapsuds, it’s time to replace the wash water.
3. **Rinse Bucket**: Dip the dishes in the clear hot-rinse water to get all of the soap off, holding them with tongs (Careful! as the water is hot).

   **Notes**: Warm water is more effective for rinsing off soap, but cold water works too. Rinse water should look clear and clean. When the water looks soapy, it’s time to replace the rinse water.

![WATER CLEANING STATION ASSEMBLY LINE](image)

4. **Cold-rinse bucket (or Sanitizer Bucket)**: Using a pair of gloves, immerse the dishes in the cold rinse bucket for 20 to 30 seconds. The water in this bucket must contain one tablespoon of eco-friendly (or homemade chlorine free) sanitizer for each gallon of water.

   **Notes**: Be careful not to splash it on your clothes or in your eyes. If the sanitizer looks soapy, it’s time to replace both the sanitizer and rinse water. Do not mix sanitizer in hot water as the chemical compound decomposes rapidly in hot water. **Do not use chlorine bleach** for sanitization.

5. **Drying Rack**: Place your dishes in the drying rack and allow them to air dry. Allow the dishes to completely air dry. As the water dries, the sanitizer evaporates. After the dishes have dried, use a dish towel to wipe off any remaining sanitizer salt residue. Do not rinse off the sanitizer or wipe the dishes before they are dry or before 2 minutes of rinsing in sanitizer bucket. The sanitizer is more effective when given time to air dry.

   **Notes**: Let them air dry if you have time; otherwise use a dish towel to wipe dry after 2 minutes of rinsing with the sanitizing water.

**Disposing of waste water**:

1. When finished, carry the water in an open, pervious (grassy) area (at camp site), about 200 feet away from any open water sources or pour it into a fire pit (if any) after screening.

   **Note**: Ideally, the water buckets should be emptied into a drain connected to a sanitary sewer or septic system. If the event place does not have such a drain system, buckets can be poured out at a location that is 200 feet (60 m) away from any open water sources. There should be a buffer of at least 200 feet of wooded or grass-covered land between the dumping area and open waters. It is important that a strainer is used to pour the wash bucket to remove the larger, more visible solids.

2. Dispose of the waste water (1<sup>st</sup> bucket) by first running a strainer through it thoroughly to capture all of the food particles.

3. Empty the strainer containing food particles into a trash can.

4. Re-use rinse water (2<sup>nd</sup> bucket) by pouring it into the empty wash bucket to rinse out any soap residue. This water can be poured out over the same spot where wash water was dumped.

5. To sanitize the first 2 buckets, re-use the cool sanitizing water (3<sup>rd</sup> bucket) by pouring it into the rinse bucket, and then into the wash bucket. Lastly, pour that water out over the same spot as the previous two dumps and let the buckets air dry.