

PROPER USE OF HOUSEHOLD BLEACH (86)

Household bleach or sodium hydrochlorite is one of the best cleaning and purifying agents that there is. It destroys more germs and bacteria as well as disinfects better than any agent readily available. Commercial launderers doing hospital and hotel laundry will always use sodium hydrochlorite. We all know that the bleach is used to purify the water in pools. Sodium hydrochlorite is also the best bleach and most effective agent for removal of mildew, oxidized staining and for whitening many fabrics. All bleaches may remove difficult staining but they do not remove soil. Mildew removers used for bathroom tile consist of sodium hydrochlorite. Most consumers however use sodium hydrochlorite incorrectly which can cause more damage than good.

PURCHASING

When purchasing household bleach always buy the smallest quantity possible. Buying 1 gallon of sodium hydrochlorite does not save money since the bleach will dissipate and turn to plain water in a short period of time. It does not matter whether you buy a store brand of sodium hydrochlorite or a brand name of sodium hydrochlorite. Most brands of sodium hydrochlorite range from 5.25% chlorine to 6% chlorine.

DILUTION

Household bleach should never be used in the 6% concentration. In strong concentrations sodium hydrochlorite will affect the fiber causing a fabric breakdown. Professional drycleaners and launderers first dilute the bleach down to a 1% concentration and then add the bleach to the washer in this concentration. This means that if you are adding $\frac{3}{4}$ of a cup of 6% bleach you are using too strong a concentration. Three quarters of a cup of bleach is approximately 6 ounces and this should first be diluted by adding 30 ounces or 1 quart of water. You will be surprised to know that this is even less than professional launderers use.

FABRIC DAMAGE

Sodium hydrochlorite should not be used on colored fabrics and wool or silk.

WHERE TO ADD BLEACH

Most washing machines have a dispenser for bleach but don't use it. It is better to first add the water to the washing machine and then add the bleach and detergent. Agitate the machine to thoroughly mix the bleach. Then add the clothes to the washer and then wash in a routine manner. This will avoid strong concentrations of

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bleach contacting clothes. Do not add ammonia since this breaks down the bleach releasing chlorine gas.

REMOVING LAST TRACES OF BLEACH

When washing with sodium hydrochlorite add $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 cup of vinegar to the rinse water. The vinegar will accelerate and use up any traces of the remaining bleach. This will eliminate odor and a possible fabric breakdown.