



THE CLEAN ROOM *PROTOCOL*

*Standard Operating Procedures for a Healthy
Snake Facility*

A practical guide to cleaning schedules, disinfection protocols, and disease prevention for ball python breeders.

Why This *Matters*



A respiratory infection can move through a collection in days. Mites can spread from one tub to an entire rack before you notice. IBD can sit dormant in a carrier for months, silently infecting every animal it contacts.

The breeders who avoid these disasters aren't lucky. They're consistent. They have protocols for every cleaning task. Specific products for specific jobs. Schedules that don't rely on memory.

The ones who lose animals? They cut corners. They skip the quarantine because the new snake "looked healthy." They reuse water dishes without disinfecting because they looked clean.

KEY INSIGHT

Looking clean is not the same as being clean.

Know Your *Cleaning Agents*

First, understand this: **disinfectants are not cleaners**. Always remove visible waste with soap and water before applying any disinfectant.

Chlorhexidine Solution (2%)

Daily spot cleaning, water dish disinfection, hand sanitizing between animals

1 oz per gallon | 10 min contact | No rinse | 6 week shelf life

F10 Veterinary Disinfectant

Deep cleaning, quarantine disinfection, outbreak response, incubator sanitation

1:500 routine | 1:250 general | 1:100 outbreak | No rinse

Sodium Hypochlorite (Bleach)

Hard surface disinfection, rack sanitizing, tool sterilization, mite treatment. **Never use on snakes directly.**

1:32 general | 1:10 outbreak | Must rinse 3x | Mix fresh daily

Accelerated Hydrogen Peroxide (AHP)

Surface disinfection, equipment cleaning, quick-turnover sanitation

Ready to use | 1-5 min contact | No rinse

THE BANNED LIST

- × Pine-Sol / pine-based cleaners (phenols toxic to reptiles)
- × Lysol / aerosol disinfectants (respiratory irritants)
- × Ammonia-based cleaners (toxic fumes)
- × Essential oil "natural" cleaners (many oils toxic)
- × Dish soap alone (cleans but doesn't disinfect)

Daily *Protocols*

Daily maintenance prevents problems from becoming outbreaks. These tasks take 20-30 minutes for a 50-animal collection. Skip them and you'll spend hours dealing with the consequences.

Morning Walkthrough

- Visual inspection of every enclosure
- Check water dishes - dump if soiled
- Spot clean visible waste immediately
- Check temps and humidity - log anomalies

Hand Hygiene

This is where most people fail. You handle one animal, then reach into the next tub. You've now connected their microbiomes.

- Wash hands before entering snake room
- Sanitize between every animal
- Full wash after quarantine animals

Spot Cleaning Protocol

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. Remove animal to holding container | 2. Remove waste and contaminated substrate | 3. Spray area with chlorhexidine |
| 4. Let sit for 10 minutes | 5. Wipe dry, add fresh substrate | 6. Return animal |

THE RULE

If you touched one animal, disinfect before touching another. No exceptions.

Weekly Protocols

Weekly deep cleaning prevents the buildup that daily spot cleaning misses. Block out 2-3 hours for a 50-animal operation.

Full Enclosure Cleaning

Every enclosure on rotating schedule. Clean 1/4 to 1/3 each week.

1. Remove animal to clean holding container
2. Remove all substrate, water dish, hides
3. Scrub with dish soap and water
4. Rinse thoroughly
5. Spray all surfaces with F10 or chlorhexidine
6. Let sit for full contact time (10-15 min)
7. Wipe dry or allow to air dry
8. Add fresh substrate, clean equipment

Water Dish Deep Clean

- Collect all water dishes
- Soak in diluted bleach (1:32) for 10 min
- Scrub with brush to remove biofilm
- Rinse thoroughly - at least 3 changes
- Air dry completely before refilling

PRO TIP Keep two sets of water dishes. While one set is being cleaned, the other is in use. We also like using disposable deli cups for water; they're more hygienic, inexpensive, and you can toss them when they get scratched or stained.

Tool Sanitation

- Metal tools: soak in diluted bleach 10 min, rinse, dry
- Plastic tools: spray with F10, let sit, wipe dry
- Fabric items: wash with hot water, unscented detergent

Quarantine *Protocols*

Every new animal is a potential outbreak. Every rescue, every purchase, every animal that left your facility and came back. Quarantine is not optional. It's the line between a healthy collection and a disaster.

Separate Room

Ideal

Different air space, different entrance, different everything.

Separate Rack

Not Advised

Same room means shared air space. Dedicated tools help, but risk remains.

Same Rack

Not Quarantine

This is wishful thinking.

Quarantine Duration

Minimum: 60 days. Some pathogens have long incubation periods.

Recommended: 90 days for unknown sources, rescues, or shows.

Clock resets: If any animal shows symptoms, all restart.

Animal Clears Quarantine When:

- 60-90 days passed with no symptoms
- Animal has eaten consistently (3+ meals)
- Shed at least once with no complications
- No respiratory symptoms observed

Outbreak *Response*

Respiratory Infection Protocol

Signs: Open-mouth breathing, clicking/wheezing, mucus, lethargy

- Isolate immediately - separate room if possible
- Raise enclosure temp to 88-90°F
- Do not handle other animals until showered/changed
- Contact reptile vet - RI requires antibiotics
- Disinfect everything with F10 at 1:100

Mite Infestation Protocol

Signs: Tiny black/red dots, excessive soaking, irritability

- Assume entire rack is affected
- Move all animals to paper towel containers
- Soak animals 20-30 min to drown active mites
- Treat with Provent-a-Mite per label
- Strip enclosures - discard substrate and decor
- Clean with bleach 1:10, rinse thoroughly
- Repeat treatment in 7-10 days (3 rounds total)

IBD / NIDOVIRUS SUSPICION

Signs: Stargazing, head wobble (non-spider), corkscrewing, neurological symptoms

Full isolation. Stop all sales. Contact vet immediately. Do not euthanize without diagnosis. These diseases are collection-ending if not caught early.

Print. Post. *Check off.*

DAILY	WEEKLY	MONTHLY
☐ Visual inspection —	☐ Enclosure deep clean F10	☐ HVAC filter check —
☐ Spot clean waste Chlorhex	☐ Water dish disinfect Bleach 1:32	☐ Full rack deep clean F10/Steam
☐ Check water dishes Chlorhex	☐ Tool sanitation Bleach/F10	☐ Thermostat calibration —
☐ Sanitize hands Sanitizer	☐ Rack wipe-down Chlorhex	☐ Replace worn decor —
☐ Check temps/humidity —	☐ Floor sweep/mop F10	☐ Quarantine disinfect F10 1:100
☐ Quarantine last —	☐ High-touch surfaces Chlorhex	☐ Audit supply stock —
	☐ Wash gloves/bags Hot water	

Product Quick Reference

PRODUCT	DILUTION	CONTACT	RINSE?	SHELF LIFE
Chlorhexidine 2%	1 oz/gal	10 min	No	6 weeks
F10 (routine)	1:500	10-15 min	No	Check label
F10 (general)	1:250	10-15 min	No	Check label
F10 (outbreak)	1:100	10-15 min	No	Check label
Bleach (general)	1:32	10 min	Yes 3x	Daily
Bleach (outbreak)	1:10	10 min	Yes 3x	Daily

Five rules. *No exceptions.*

- O1 **Clean first, disinfect second.**
Organic matter neutralizes disinfectants.
- O2 **Contact time matters.**
Spray and wipe is not disinfection. Let it sit.
- O3 **Quarantine is 60-90 days.**
30 days is not enough.
- O4 **Never mix bleach with anything.**
Especially ammonia. Toxic fumes.
- O5 **Looking clean ≠ being clean.**
Follow the protocol every time.

A clean facility is not a guarantee of health. But a dirty facility is a guarantee of problems.

Track your feeding schedules, breeding cycles, and animal health in one place.

THE RACK | therackapp.io