

# EMERGENCY SANITATION

## Introduction

Emergency sanitation supplies are the most overlooked emergency supplies when forming a comprehensive disaster preparedness plan. After a catastrophic disaster, water and the use of plumbing may be unavailable.

Without proper emergency sanitation accommodations such as a portable toilet and waste treatment chemicals, conditions may reach extremely unsanitary and unhealthy conditions, especially in large groups.

When planning, keep in mind that toilets will need to function without power, without water supply, and possibly without waste disposal.

## Supplies

- Toilet paper
- Soap, liquid detergent
- Feminine supplies
- Personal hygiene items
- Heavy-duty plastic garbage bags and ties (for personal sanitation uses) – large supply
- Plastic bucket with tight lid (to use as emergency toilet)
- Disinfectant
- Liquid household chlorine bleach – at least 2 points (for disinfecting purposes)
- Towelettes
- Large plastic waterproof garbage can with tight fitting lid (for temporary waste disposal)
- Grocery bags
- Newspapers
- Disposable diapers (for baby)

## Water Substitutes for Cleaning

Keeping clean is essential to good health. Because water is so precious and should be reserved for drinking purposes, consider the following other ways to wash the body:

- Rubbing alcohol
- Lotions containing alcohol
- Shaving lotion
- Face creams and lotions
- Towelettes
- Wet wash cloth – Use a wet wash cloth to clean teeth, wash face, comb hair, and wash body
- Makeshift shower – Use a spray bottle to shower
- Makeshift Bathtub – Create a bathtub by digging a trench in the ground, lining it with newspapers and thick plastic sheeting, then filling it with water. If possible, heat the water by the fireplace.

### QUICK REFERENCE

Obtain portable toilet, disinfectant, and other appropriate supplies

IF YOU EVER HAVE TO USE YOUR SUPPLIES, REMEMBER TO:

- 1) Line portable toilet w/plastic bag before use
- 2) Put disinfectant in plastic bag with waste
- 3) Seal waste in plastic bag with tie
- 4) Put bag in large, lined plastic trash can and keep sealed until City provides instructions
- 5) Follow other sanitation guidelines as outlined

## Portable Toilet options

- Self-contained, chemical-type toilets
- Portable camp toilets
- Small trash cans with lids
- A sturdy 5-gallon bucket lined with heavy-duty plastic bags
- Toilet seats: use an old seat or make one out of 2 boards placed parallel to each other across the top of the bucket
- The toilet in your home. Even though it cannot be flushed, it can still be used as follows:
  - Remove all the bowl water
  - Line it with a heavy-duty plastic bag
  - When finished, add a small amount of deodorant or disinfectant, securely tie the bag, and dispose of it in a large trash can with a tight fitting lid

## Waste Storage/Disposal

Failure to properly store/dispose of human wastes can lead to epidemics of such diseases as typhoid, dysentery, and diarrhea. Storage suggestions:

- Homemade soil bags - put one large grocery bag inside another, and a layer of shredded newspaper or other absorbent material in between.
- Heavy plastic bags with twist ties
- Large plastic trash can with tight-fitting lid lined with a heavy plastic bag. Put individual plastic bags into can and keep sealed until the City can properly and permanently dispose of waste.

Empty your emergency toilet into this storage can as often as necessary. A small amount of household disinfectant should be added after each use.

## Waste Sanitizing/Disinfecting

After each use, pour a disinfectant such as bleach into the portable toilet/container. This will help avoid infection and stop the spread of disease. Cover the container tightly when not in use.

### Disinfectants:

- 1 part liquid chlorine bleach to 10 parts water
- Calcium hypochlorite (HTH) – available at swimming pool supply stores
- Portable toilet chemicals – available through recreational vehicle supply stores
- Powdered chlorinated lime – available at building supply stores

### Controlling Odors and Insects:

- Keep living area clear of debris, garbage, refuse and body wastes
- When possible, repair holes to keep out rodents
- Household insecticides will work in small and enclosed areas
- Insecticides and deodorants should be used when necessary to control odors and insects breeding in containers that cannot be emptied immediately

## Miscellaneous Tips & Guidelines

Consuming contaminated water and food can cause diarrhea, poisoning, and intestinal diseases. Protect against diseases.

- Keep body, hands, and cooking and eating utensils clean
- Use paper plates or eat from the original food containers if water is not available for washing dishes
- Wash and peel all fruits and vegetables
- Keep all food in covered containers
- Prepare only as much as will be eaten at each meal
- Keep cooking and eating utensils clean

## Sanitation DON'Ts

- **Don't bury your waste.** Keep it in a portable disposal container until the public sewage system is working or other instructions are provided by the City
- **Don't use dry bleach** as a disinfectant - it is caustic and not safe for this type of use
- **Don't flush household toilets...**
  - ...**when water service is interrupted.** The water remaining in the fixture is not sufficient to flush the wastes down the sewer. Clogging may result and your living conditions then become just that much more uncomfortable
  - ...**if water lines are damaged** or if damage is suspected