

EMERGENCY SANITATION

Following a major disaster, sanitation facilities may not be available if water and sewage lines have been disrupted. Because cleanliness is essential to maintaining good health, it is important to know how to improvise emergency sanitation facilities.

Have emergency sanitation supplies on hand

- medium-size plastic bucket with tight lid
- plastic garbage bags and ties (heavy duty)
- household chlorine bleach
- small shovel (for digging an expedient latrine)
- soap, liquid detergent
- toilet paper
- towelettes

Building a makeshift toilet

Line a medium-size plastic bucket with a garbage bag. (If the sewage lines are broken but the toilet bowl is usable, place the plastic garbage bag around bowl.) Make a toilet seat out of two boards placed parallel to each other across the bucket. An old toilet seat will also work.

Sanitizing waste

After each use, pour a disinfectant such as bleach into the container to avoid infection and spreading of disease. Cover the container tightly when not in use.

Disposing of waste

Bury garbage and human wastes in the ground to avoid the spread of disease by rats and insects. Dig a pit two to three feet deep and at least 50 feet from any well, spring or water supply. LOCAL REGULATIONS MAY PROHIBIT YOU FROM BURYING HUMAN WASTES. LISTEN TO THE RADIO FOR INSTRUCTIONS, OR CHECK WITH YOUR LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT. If the garbage cannot be buried immediately, strain the liquids into the emergency toilet, wrap the residue in several layers of newspapers and store it in a large can with a tight-fitting lid. After two or three days, place the can outside until it can be buried.

Disinfectants

The best choice is a solution of one part liquid chlorine bleach to ten parts of water. Other commercial disinfectants include calcium hypochlorite which is available at swimming pool supply stores, portable toilet chemicals which are available through recreational vehicle supply stores and powdered chlorinated lime which is available at building supply stores.

Keeping the body clean

Keeping clean is essential to good health. Because water is so precious and should be reserved for drinking purposes, consider alternatives to water for cleansing the body.

Water Substitutes for Cleansing

- rubbing alcohol
- lotions containing alcohol
- shaving lotions
- face creams and hand lotions
- towelettes

Wet Wash Cloth

- Use a wet wash cloth to brush teeth, wash faces, 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.

Controlling rodents and insects

- Keep living area clear of debris and body wastes.
- When possible, repair holes and keep out rodents.
- Only use household insecticides in small, enclosed, and occupied areas.

Intestinal ailments

Consuming contaminated water and food can cause diarrhea, food poisoning and other intestinal diseases. Take steps to protect against these diseases.

- keep body and hands 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 food as will be eaten at each meal
- keep cooking and eating utensils clean