

Emergency Sanitation Preparedness

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See Video resources at www.darvic.net/prepared4

During previous emergency and catastrophic situations, **more people have lost their lives due to disease arising from poor sanitation than the incident itself.** We are talking about human waste materials. OK, lets call it pee and poop for the purpose of this handout.

We may be prepared with a supply of food and water to last over a period of time, but most of us are unprepared for sanitary disposal of pee and poop. Our first option is of course our toilets, but we must be sure that they are functioning properly and that we have a water supply sufficient to use water to flush them over the time of the emergency. If water is in short supply this may not be a good option even if the toilets work. It may or may not be advisable to flush a bucket of water down the toilet to make sure that it is working. Listen and pay attention to advisories from the local authorities. (Be sure to have a battery operated radio with the NOAA channel available.) The sewer system may be backing up somewhere or broken and running into the ground water, so it could “work” from your end but be a health hazard at the other end.

The first option for non functioning toilets is to place a 13 gallon bag (of good quality) in the toilet and use it as previously used. This may prove to be somewhat awkward if all water connections to the toilet are not cut off. A better option would be an emergency toilet that you may easily prepare for very little cost.

You will need:

- at least one 5 gallon bucket for poop and another one or a smaller bucket, or chamber pot, or stainless steal bowl for pee. As long as it is pee it can be emptied with a little water into your garden or on to the soil around your bushes. It makes is a good source of nitrogen for your plants, however, **it (pee) should be kept separate from the poop.**
- 13 gallon trash bags of very good quality. Try to imagine the mess that you would have if you used an inferior bag when trying to remove it. You will need several dozens bags.
- You should also have a supply of heavy duty black garbage bags that can be used as a receptacle for several of the white 13 gallon bags. Care should be taken when opening the black bags to add an additional smaller bag. Do not over load ether type of bag. Keeping them sealed is important in maintaining a sanitary environment. However, it may be some time before garbage services are restored and you want to keep this particular garbage separate from other non human waste garbage. Your black garbage bags when full (or even while filling) should be kept in a large regular city provided garbage container or something similar to it with a lid. Be careful not to break the bags as you put them in the garbage container. The 13 gal bags should be taken outside and put in the Black garbage bags outside. You don't want to be hauling large garbage bags around your house trying to get them outside. Make the trip outside with smallest load. Even at that you need to be careful. The white bags need to be half to 2/3 full when sealed off and moved to the second stage black bag.
- One hand garden trowel for adding dirt or kitty litter or saw dust/animal bedding
- Loose dirt, cat liter, saw dust bedding, or other organic material to cover the poop in the bag to keep it from smelling so bad and attracting flies.
- Calcium hypochloride (pool shock)

- Spray bottle to keep the shock solution in that you will make for sanitizing the seat and the bucket.
- A swimming pool noodle. You will make a slice from the edge of the noodle to the center and cut it then the diameter of the bucket. This will allow you to place the noodle over the edge of the bucket to hold the bag in place and provide a more comfortable seat or purchase a commercial emergency toilet seat for bucket. (this can be purchased in several places including Lowes, Home Depot and sometimes Costco). The pool noodle seemed less effective than was thought but will do in a pinch.
- Hand Sanitizer
- Disposal diapers
- Box of gloves
- Bleach (unless you have read and understand how to use the pool shock to make bleach when you need it)
- Personal hygiene items
- Hand soap and towels
- Toilet paper and wet wipes

When you put a new bag in your bucket use the trowel to put a small amount of dirt, cat litter, saw dust, or small animal bedding into the bottom of the sack. Your deposits will land in this. After usage, apply another layer of dirt, cat liter, and/or saw dust/small animal bedding, to the bottom of the bag. Spray the interior of the bag with the hypochloride solution. (see the method for making a solution using the pool shock below or at the Center for Disease Control website.) You could also spray it with a bleach/water solution or Lysol if you don't have anything else. Pool shock is easier to store because it is not liquid and you can make up a little at a time. Don't use the powdered pool shock as that would be a waste of a valuable resource. Keep that pool shock dry and stored in a cool place in an air tight container where it will be available to make a bleach solution when you need it. Cover the bucket with the bucket lid or put the lid down on your portable toilet seat, wash your hands and use hand sanitizer. When the bag is one half or two thirds full or when the smell becomes unbearable, take it out, tie it very tightly and remove it to a trash area. It is a good idea to double bag it inside of a black garbage bag, and put it inside of your trash can that you are using for human waste and which should be outside. This black bag can be opened to receive 3 or 4 of the small bags and then closed tightly and another black heavy duty bag can be used. . If trash services are still available, put it in the garbage to be taken away. If nothing is available, you can store it in your garbage container outside for up to two weeks. In the meantime, if this is going to be a longer term issue than you and your community need to decide how and where this material can be disposed of more permanently.

This bucket, once stocked, should be set aside and used only in an emergency. If you have stocked it properly, your family should have what you need to be sanitary in your poop and pee needs for sufficient time to find a more permanent solution.

There are emergency toilets that you can order online from Amazon or Ebay. I have no personal knowledge of their effectiveness, but the cost is very expensive. The cost of the emergency toilet is about \$25 to \$30.00. These items can be found at Lowes, Home Depot and the Dollar store. Some of the items listed above may be available in your home already. Take the time to put them together in one place, inside the bucket or inside a cabinet in the bathroom.

Please stay healthy.