

# Emergency Sanitation Preparedness January 2020 Update

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**During some 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, let's 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. Just because you can flush a toilet doesn't mean the sewer system is functioning properly. It may be that your flushed material is emptying out of some broken pipe.. 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. Use your emergency toilet system until you get the all clear to use the sewer system.

Poop and Pee Need to be separated. Easy for males not so easy for females.

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. You may have usable water but not usable sewer. 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 urine collection device 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. The combination can cause all kinds of problems.
- 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 at least a dozen bags. There are also bags made for this purpose available on amazon but they are a little expensive and they are biodegradable and begin to break down with in 3-4 days. If you are holding them in a black garbage bagIn for pick up when the garbage collection service resumes you may have a mess on your hands.
- 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 or what ever begs you are using. Care should be taken when opening the black bags to add an additional smaller bag. Do not overload 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. This should be a seperate container from where you are collecting regular garbage. Have this contain available pre-disaster. Some people have an extra garbage can to hold garden tools or other things that could be repurposed during an emergency. 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. You can take the whole bucket outside and then fix the white bag to fit into th black bag so that you are not carrying unsupported human waste around in a bag

- One hand garden trowel or scoop of some kind for scooping up the topping material listed below.
- Loose dirt, cat litter, saw dust bedding, or other organic material to cover the poop in the bag to keep it from smelling so bad and attracting flies.
- Spray bottle to use with a disinfectant for cleaning surfaces and toilet. Empty when stored in the bucket when not in use.
- Clorox or other approved disinfectant to be used in the spray bottle when the emergency toilet is in use. Do not use pool shock at this point the CDC has pulled its approval of storing pool shock as a way to make chlorine bleach because of disastrous results for people using it in Puerto Rico and Heite
- 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. (You can cut this into smaller pieces so that it will fit better.) This will allow you to place the noodle pieces 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).
- Hand Sanitizer
- Disposal diapers if you have babies
- Box of gloves, medical type for handling human fluids
- Female Personal hygiene items
- Hand soap and towels
- A bowl or container to serve as a wash basin.
- Toilet paper and wet wipes

When you put a new bag in your bucket use the trowel or scoop 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 litter, and/or saw dust/small animal bedding, to the bottom of the bag. You could also spray it with a bleach/water solution or Lysol if you don't have anything else.

Cover the bucket with the bucket lid or put the lid down on your portable toilet seat, wash your hands with soap and water. If you do not have paper towels air dry your hands or use a clean cloth towel. You may also use hand sanitizer after washing and drying. If using disposable gloves when dealing with the toilet remove them and put them in a ziplock bag for that purpose. They will go into the black garbage bag with the other human waste.

When the bag your using for catching the poop 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. (dispose of this ziplock bag of used gloves when full in the same black garbage bag as the poop when you take it out to the garbage can.)

If trash services are still available, put it in the garbage to be taken away. If nothing is available, you can store it in a garbage container outside for up to two weeks separate from other garbage. 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. 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.