

Alternative Sanitation



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Without power or water, sewer pumps will not be working. Lines may rupture during an earthquake or landside. Since solid human waste is very toxic, sealing off your toilets becomes critical to prevent noxious, flammable fumes; sewage; or unwanted critters from coming into your home. Follow these simple steps:

1. Shut off the water supply to the toilet.
2. Scoop out all the water in the tank and dry.
3. Scoop out all the water from the bowl and dry.
4. Put a **racquetball** (or other squishy ball that would plug the opening) into a **tube sock**, rub with shortening (or other greasy substance), and wedge it deep into the opening until tight, leaving the end of the sock sticking out so it can be easily removed once utilities are working.
5. Measure the size of other openings into your home.
 - a. Floor drain(s)—Usually in the basement or with the furnace and/or water heater; remove the cover to measure the size of the pipe.
 - b. Drain pipe for the washer.
 - c. Tubs and sinks—Make sure you can close and secure all openings.
6. Purchase **plumber's test plugs** (available in several sizes at home improvement stores) to plug these openings. Following a disaster, insert the test plug and twist clockwise to tighten OR use a squishy ball covered in a tube sock with a lubricant applied to plug all openings.

Purchase **two 6-gallon buckets** with toilet seats (or use a piece of pipe insulation to soften the rim). Use one bucket as is for liquid waste (urine). No need to line this bucket. In addition, a large plastic cup (at least a 2-cup capacity) or empty 32-oz. yogurt container can be used to catch the urine. Empty outside in your yard or garden each time right after going. (Urine is sterile when it comes out of the body, but because it is warm, can become a breeding ground for pathogens.)

Use another 6-gallon bucket for **solid waste**. (Note: Younger children may adjust more easily to a dry toilet. Create this by disinfecting the entire toilet after the water has been removed and following the same steps below.)

1. Line the bucket (or bowl) with a heavy-duty plastic bag.
2. Add a brown paper bag. Roll the top down to keep it open and make it a good height.
3. Keep a small bucket of absorbent material (like kitty litter, sawdust, peat moss, sand, etc.) and a scoop nearby.
4. Sprinkle absorbent material on solid waste every time someone goes.
5. Lay flat cardboard across the opening, close the lid, and place a heavy object on top to prevent access by small children or pets. The weighted cardboard also helps with odor.

Dispose of solid waste (once or twice a day):

1. Use disposable gloves when handling.
2. Carry the entire bucket outside to empty. (If using a dry toilet, lift the plastic bag with inside paper bag liner into a bucket or box before carrying out to prevent accidental spills in your home.)
3. Dig a hole, 30–36" deep, in your yard around bushes or trees, but NOT in your garden.
4. Put the brown paper bag into the hole. Never bury waste inside a plastic bag as it will not decompose. When the plastic liner needs to be disposed of, drop it in the hole on top of the paper bag. NEVER put this bag in with normal trash.
5. Cover with 1–2" of dirt.
6. Seal the hole with a board that covers the entire opening and heavy bricks to keep animals out.
7. Keep layering until about 6" from the top.
8. While wearing a face mask, add 2–3" of lime (IFA carries this). Lime helps with decomposition AND discourages animals from digging there as the dust irritates eyes and breathing passages.

If the ground is frozen, line a large trashcan with a tight lid with a heavy-duty plastic bag and place paper bags inside. Allow to freeze and bury properly when the ground thaws.