

# It's easy to make and use an emergency toilet

In a disaster you may not be able to use your normal toilet because sewerage lines may be broken or damaged and be unusable.

## Long-drop

You will need:

- Tools to dig long drop (e.g spade or post hole borer)
- Soil or other fill

Dig a hole up to one metre deep and 30 – 40 cm wide. Make sure the hole is away from any water source, above the ground water table and from any vegetable gardens.

After each use, cover the waste with soil or other mulch. Place a piece of board or heavy duty cardboard over the hole when not in use. This will discourage pests or pets from getting into the toilet.

A toilet frame can be built over the long drop (see making a simple 'toilet' frame).

When the hole is full to about 30 cm below surface level, fill with soil and dig a new long drop.

**This hole can also be used to hold the solid waste from a bucket system.**

Using a nest like this will reduce the cleaning required for the bucket. Use straw, paper and leaf mulch.



## Simple bucket system

You will need:

- Two strong 15 – 20 litre buckets or pails
- Dry mulch (e.g. sawdust, dry leaves, soil or more shredded newspaper)
- Water (2 litres of water per person per day)

Use **bucket 1** for urine, add 2 – 3 cms of water to the bottom of the bucket. This bucket should be for urine only (add toilet paper to the other bucket). Empty the urine bucket daily by diluting with additional water and pouring it on to a disused area of your garden or other green space.

Use **Bucket 2** for faeces, and all toilet paper. Create a nest (see image) at the bottom of this bucket using dry mulch. After each use add a large handful (or cup) of dry mulch to the bucket to cover. Keep the bucket covered between uses.

Keep this faeces bucket as dry as possible will reduce any smells. Use the sawdust, straw or shredded newspaper to absorb any spills.

The bucket will need to be emptied at least every three days. Empty into a hole in the ground or in a large storage bin (e.g. wheelie bin). Keep separate from other household waste and cover with extra mulch, straw or soil.

### Separate your waste

An emergency toilet works best if the liquid and solid wastes are kept separated. This will make the waste easier to handle and reduce smells.

### Health Tips

After using the toilet or emptying the bucket wash your hands thoroughly using soap and water, or hand sanitiser. Dry your hands thoroughly

Use a nail brush to get rid of any material that is beneath your nails.

If someone does get sick (e.g. vomiting or diarrhoea), try and use another bucket. Take extra care when emptying the bucket and disinfect with a dilute bleach solution. Seek medical attention if symptoms persist.

## Making a simple 'toilet' frame

Make a seat, for example cut a hole in a garden chair and place chair over hole. Toilet seats can be unscrewed from existing toilets and attached to the chair.

This chair can be placed over a long drop hole or buckets.



A frame, with toilet seats can be built to hold the buckets. Any frame should be strong enough to support users, easy to clean (painting or varnishing will help) and easy to open so buckets can be removed and emptied.

Information about building or buying frames can be found at [www.composttoilet.co.nz](http://www.composttoilet.co.nz).

Bucket, seats and frames can be set up inside your home, use your existing bathroom or laundry if possible.

Keep away from kitchens and other food preparations areas.

### Water

The water used for diluting and cleaning in an emergency toilet does not need to be drinking water. It does not need to be boiled before use.

Sources of water for an emergency toilet can include:

- reusing water that has been used for cooking or cleaning;
- collecting water from streams or rainwater.

### Safe handling tips

Use gloves when emptying buckets.

Rinse and clean the faeces bucket after emptying.  
Disinfect with a dilute bleach solution if necessary

Make one person in your house to be responsible for emergency toilet duties – emptying and cleaning the buckets.

Keep the toilet and waste material well separated from any food preparation or food growing areas.

### Use by children

Keep the gap between the toilet seat and the bucket as small as possible, to reduce accidents. Raise the height of buckets if possible.

Ensure the your usual toilet is sealed closed so it can't be used.

For young children use symbols or paintings to indicate which bucket should be used.