



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Health**

# Sanitation provision and maintenance on construction sites and mobile, temporary or remote worksites in Western Australia

**DRAFT Public Health Guideline**

## Disclaimer

This guideline is provided by the Western Australian Department of Health as a guide for the provision of sanitation on construction sites and mobile, temporary or remote worksites in WA.

The information and advice provided are made available in good faith and are derived from sources believed to be reliable and accurate at the time of release.

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## 1 Aim

This guideline has two aims.

1. To set out the accepted practices relating to sanitation (temporary toilets) provision and maintenance at construction sites and mobile, temporary or remote worksites.
2. To provide guidance for [Public Health Act 2016](#) (Public Health Act) authorised officers when using the general public health duty to prevent potential harm to public health from occurring.

This guideline should be read in conjunction with the [Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996](#) and the WA Code of Practice for [Workplace Amenities and Facilities 2002](#).

## 2 The public health risk

The use of appropriate toilets and hand washing - preferably with soap - prevents the transfer of bacteria, viruses and parasites found in human excreta which otherwise may contaminate the soil, water resources and food. It also decreases the risk of contact transfer of diseases by infected persons. Effective sanitation systems provide barriers between excreta and humans in such a way as to break the disease transmission cycle. The main transmission cycle of concern is the faecal-oral disease transmission through faeces, fingers, flies, fields, fluids and food.

The Department of Health (DOH) has identified five health areas of concern relating to the provision of toilets at construction sites and mobile, temporary or remote worksites:

1. Provision and maintenance of toilets
2. Toilet types and their design
3. Toilet locations
4. Wastewater overflows and other health emergencies

Failure to address these health risk factors can result in poor public health outcomes for site workers and visitors.

## 3 Compliance with this guideline

Public health risks associated with sanitation provision on construction sites have historically been regulated by the DOH through the *Health (Construction Work) Regulations 1973* and Part 3 of the *Health (Temporary Sanitary Conveniences) Regulations 1997*. The repeal of these regulations means the provision of sanitation on construction sites and mobile, temporary or remote worksites will be regulated by the *Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996* (the OSH Regulations) with some public health risks no longer specifically regulated.

Under Part 3 of the Public Health Act, the general public health duty requires that a person must take all reasonable and practicable steps to prevent or minimise any harm to public health that might foreseeably result from anything done or omitted to be done by the person.

This guideline sets out the accepted practices relating to the provision of toilets and washbasins on construction sites and mobile, temporary or remote worksites. Under section 34(3) of the Public Health Act, a person will not be taken to be in breach of the general public health duty if they are acting either in a manner that accords with generally accepted practices or circumstances prescribed by regulations.

When a site manager fails to comply with this Guideline, this may be grounds for *Public Health Act 2016* authorised officers to issue an improvement notice or enforcement order, in accordance with the general public health duty provided by the Public Health Act.

## 4 Application

This guideline applies to **construction sites** and **mobile, temporary or remote worksites**.

A mobile, temporary or remote worksite includes a non-permanent worksite that is not located in a town or city, where there is not a toilet facility within

- A 200 m radius of that site where workers only option to get the toilet is walking; OR
- A 2 km radius of that site where transportation vehicles that can be used to access the toilet are provided.

It is a site where people have been employed (this could be paid employment or volunteer employment) and they will remain on that site for the period of the working shift.

Examples of mobile, temporary or remote worksites include:

- Roadside clean up, road works or road maintenance works
- Tree planting or other natural resource management work
- Archaeological digs
- Geological surveys or other mining exploration related work
- Fruit picking/Seasonal farm work

The guidelines do not apply to:

- Operational minesites (minesites under construction are classified as construction sites).
- A permanent worksite located in a remote area
- A worksite that involves multiple locations located more than 500m apart that will be visited by a worker a various times throughout the working day (e.g. groundwater sampling sites)
- Employer provided accommodation
- Remote construction sites (these are captured by the construction site definition)

## 5 Recommendations for both construction sites and mobile, temporary and remote worksites

### 5.1 Number of toilets

Employers are to ensure their workers have access to toilet facilities when they are at the workplace and that these facilities are readily accessible to all workers. Separation of facilities by gender may be appropriate for construction sites and mobile, temporary or remote worksites.

The provision of separate facilities is to be based on the worker ratios by Safe Work Australia (Table 1 below).

Table 1 worker ratios as suggested by the Safe Work Australia Model Code of Practice Construction Work

Male Facilities	Female Facilities	Unisex Facilities
Closet Pan - 1 per 15 males (or fraction of)	Closet Pan - 1 per 10 females (or fraction of)	Only when the total number of people who normally work at the workplace is 10 or less and there are two or less workers of one gender.
Urinal - 1 per 20 males (or fraction of)		
Note: A urinal is not required for less than 10 workers. If a slab urinal is provided, each 600 mm shall be regarded as one urinal.		

### 5.2 Allowable toilet types

#### 5.2.1 Standard temporary toilets

Fresh water flush and straight drop toilets are to be used on construction sites and mobile, temporary or remote worksites (Hire and Rental Industry Association Ltd Portable Toilets Division Code of Practice 2015 – Guidelines for the provision of portable toilets on construction sites and at events where connection to a sewer is not practical (HRIA COP)).

#### 5.2.2 Accessible temporary toilets

Workers and visitors may require alternative toilet types such as accessible temporary toilets.

Site managers are to consider the provision of accessible facilities for construction sites or mobile, temporary or remote worksites. Accessible facilities are to be provided where required.

A lack of accessible facilities may be discriminatory and may pose a public health risk for workers and visitors.

#### 5.2.3 Sewer connected toilets

Some temporary toilets are able to be connected to sewer. A sewer connected temporary toilet is to be used where a sewer is available.

Where a sewer becomes available during the lifetime of the work being undertaken, the toilet is to be connected to the sewer within two weeks of the sewer being installed (based on the Queensland *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011*).

### 5.3 Toilet maintenance requirements

The toilet provided is to be maintained in a clean and serviceable condition.

Standard temporary toilets are pumped out in line with the schedule identified in the HIRA COP shown in Table 2 and Table 3 below.

Table 2 Pump out schedules at construction sites dependent on toilet type

Construction Site Toilet Type	Best Practice	Acceptable
Fresh Water Flush	Weekly full pump and reset	Fortnightly pump and reset
Open Closer (straight drop)	Fortnightly pump and reset	Fortnightly pump and reset

Table 3 Recommended toilet numbers based on servicing schedule and number of people on site

No. of People on Site	No. of Toilets based on Weekly Service	No. of Toilets based on Fortnightly Service
1 – 5	1	1
6 – 10	1	2
11 – 20	2	4
21 +	Add 1 toilet for every 10 additional people	Not recommended

### 5.4 Toilet construction

Conditions in Western Australia can be harsh for temporary toilets. The toilets may have to withstand a number of months of being on site without breaking or failing or may have to survive extreme weather events. The design of a toilet is important in ensuring that waste is adequately removed throughout the period for which the toilet is used.

Site managers are to ensure that toilets provided will be able to withstand the conditions on site for the duration of the work. When an issue arises due to the construction of the toilet the site manager is to fix or replace the toilet as required.

## 6 Construction site specific recommendations

### 6.1 Provision of toilets

Standard temporary toilets are to be provided on any construction site in accordance with the [Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996](#) and the WA Code of Practice for [Workplace Amenities and Facilities 2002](#)

## 6.2 Toilet locations

Toilets on construction sites are to be located within 100 m of construction workers. Where the construction site is a multistorey building, a toilet is to be located on every second floor (as per the [Safe Work Australia Construction Work Code of Practice, July 2012](#)).

Where a construction site has a tower crane, site managers are to consider providing a fast access option to crane operators, such as a construction hoist, to give operators quick access to toilets. In situations where this is not feasible, site managers should consider the provision of toilet breaks during a shift where operators can leave the cab every 1 - 2 hours.

## 6.3 Removal of toilets once construction has finished

Site managers are to remove the toilet once construction is completed in accordance with the requirements of the [Building Regulations 2012](#).

# 7 Mobile, temporary or remote worksite specific recommendations

## 7.1 Provision of Toilets

A Standard Temporary Toilet is to be provided on a mobile, temporary or remote worksite where there is not a toilet facility within 2 km of the site.

## 7.2 Toilet locations

On mobile, temporary or remote worksites, a toilet is to be provided within walking distance (no more than 200 m) from where the majority of work is taking place. If workers have easy access to a vehicle the toilet can be located further than 200 m away from where the majority of work is taking place as long as the distance between worker and toilet is less than 2 km.

The distance of 200 m has been chosen due to the nature of work that may be occurring on mobile, temporary or remote worksites. It may not be feasible to require that a toilet is provided 100 m from workers.

# 8 Wastewater overflows and other health emergencies

In situations where a wastewater overflow or other health emergency occurs, the site manager is to ensure that the wastewater overflow or other health emergency is dealt with in a timely manner.

# 9 How General Public Health Duty can be used

The general public health duty requires that a person must take all reasonable and practicable steps to prevent or minimise any harm to public health that might foreseeably result from anything done or omitted to be done by the person. Under the Public Health Act *harm* includes activities that may have adverse impacts and effects on a person's physical or psychological wellbeing, whether it is long term or an immediate impact.

The general public health duty is broad and flexible, ensuring that it captures both known and emerging risks to public health. However where the general duty is to apply there must be some clear *harm* (or foreseeable harm) to public health. In cases where matters are a nuisance or amenity problem but no health effect can be proven, the general duty will not apply.

This guideline sets out the generally accepted practices relating to the provision of toilets and washbasins on construction sites and mobile, temporary or remote worksites. Where a site manager or equivalent fails to follow these generally accepted practices, this may be considered

a failure to comply with the general public health duty. This may constitute grounds for action to be taken under the Public Health Act, including the issue of an improvement notice or enforcement order.

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## 10 Glossary

Word	Definition
<b>Construction site</b>	A workplace at which <b>construction work</b> is done and includes any adjoining area where plant or other materials used or to be used in connection with that work are located or kept and over which the main contractor has control for the purpose of doing the construction work.
<b>Construction work</b>	<p>(a) the construction, erection, installation, alteration, repair, maintenance, cleaning, painting, renewal, removal, excavation, dismantling or demolition of, or addition to, with any of those things, that is done at or adjacent to the place where the building or structure is located; or</p> <p>(b) work on which a hoisting appliance or any scaffold or shoring is used or intended to be used; or</p> <p>(c) work in driving or extracting piles, sheet piles or trench sheet; or</p> <p>(d) work in laying any pipe or work in lining pipe that is done at or adjacent to the place where the pipe is laid or to be laid; or</p> <p>(e) work in sinking or lining or altering, repairing, maintaining, renewing, removing, or dismantling a well or borehole; or</p> <p>(f) road works, earthworks or reclamation; or</p> <p>(g) work in laying an underground cable or work related to laying an underground cable that is done at or adjacent to the place where the cable is laid or to be laid.</p>
<b>Mobile, temporary or remote worksite</b>	<p>This is a non-permanent worksite that is not located in a town or city and where there is not a toilet facility within :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 200 m radius of that site where workers only option to get the toilet is walking; OR</li> <li>• A 2 km radius of that site where transportation vehicles that can be used to access the toilet are provided.</li> </ul> <p>It is a site where people have been employed (this could be paid employment or volunteer employment) and they will remain on that site for the period of the working shift.</p> <p>Examples of mobile, temporary or remote worksites include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roadside clean up, road works or road maintenance works</li> <li>• Tree planting or other natural resource management work</li> <li>• Archaeological digs</li> <li>• Geological surveys or other mining exploration related work</li> <li>• Fruit picking/Seasonal farm work</li> </ul> <p>Mobile, temporary or remote worksites do not include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operational minesites (minesites under construction are classified as construction sites).</li> <li>• A permanent worksite located in a remote area</li> <li>• A worksite that involves multiple locations located more than 500m apart that will be visited by a worker at various times throughout the working day (e.g. groundwater sampling sites)</li> <li>• Employer provided accommodation</li> <li>• Remote construction sites (these are captured by the construction site definition)</li> </ul>

Word	Definition
<b>Sanitation provision</b>	<p>Where a way to remove human waste is provided. This is done through provision of toilets and handwashing facilities.</p> <p>Other sanitation related terms include: water closet, closet pan, sanitary compartment, sanitation facilities and ablution facilities.</p>
<b>Temporary Toilet</b>	<p>A portable toilet of a temporary nature that is designed and constructed so that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) it may be connected to the sewerage system on a temporary basis; or</li> <li>(b) it is connected to a sewage storage tank.</li> </ul>
<b>Standard Temporary Toilets</b>	<p>Temporary toilets designed for able-bodied patrons.</p>
<b>Accessible Temporary Toilets</b>	<p>Temporary toilets designed for persons with disability who have greater access requirements such as wheelchairs, walking aids or require carer assistance.</p>

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