

# Portable toilets on worksites

This information sheet provides advice for builders and workers on the installation, servicing and transport of portable, self-contained toilets on housing construction sites.

December 2011

## Background

Workers need to have access to clean, hygienic and conveniently located toilets at all times. If it is not practicable to provide access to permanent toilets, which is often the case on housing construction sites, portable toilets need to be provided.

Often, portable toilets are not cleaned, serviced or transported in a safe and hygienic way, putting workers and members of the public at risk of infections and disease.

## Installing portable toilets

Portable toilets should be:

- situated on stable, flat ground to ensure effective operation and stability
- accessible by a clear path suitable for all weather conditions.

## On-site cleaning and servicing

The builder should ensure portable toilets are checked daily and cleaned as required. If there is no contracted cleaning arrangement, the builder should make alternate arrangements to have the toilets cleaned and maintained.

In addition to cleaning as required, toilets must also be serviced regularly. On-site servicing is generally undertaken by the hire company and should include but is not limited to:

- checking pumps and components for effective operation
- repairing any defects
- pumping and rinsing empty sewage storage tanks
- adding deodoriser and treatment chemicals to the sewage storage tank
- refilling the holding tank with water
- replenishing soap or other hand disinfectant
- replacing toilet paper
- cleaning and disinfecting the internal compartment, including fittings such as pump and door handles, the floor, seat and bowl.

Tanks should be pumped out at a frequency that minimises odour production and ensures the waste in the tank is unlikely to exceed 50 per cent of the tank's useable capacity before the next scheduled service. WorkSafe recommends pumping out storage tanks every two weeks, particularly in warmer months. At a maximum, you should not leave pumping out for longer than four weeks.

Workers must be supplied with the appropriate personal protective equipment for cleaning and servicing toilets. Vaccinations for hepatitis and tetanus should also be made available to them.

## Transporting portable toilets

Toilet bowls in portable toilets do not have a water-tight seal. This means liquid waste can escape the bowls and pose a potential health risk to members of the public or workers who handle the toilets. Portable toilets should only be moved or transported when the toilet has less than the following volumes in the storage tank:

Toilet useable capacity	Maximum allowable volume during transport
Less than 220 litres	20 litres
Greater than 220 litres	20 litres or 10 per cent of the useable storage tank capacity, whichever is greater.

## Further information

Contact the WorkSafe Victoria Advisory Service on 1800 136 089 or go to **[worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://worksafe.vic.gov.au)**

Guidance Note – *Amenities on housing sites*

Guidance Note – *Amenities required on greenfield developments and minor civil construction and maintenance sites*

Compliance Code – *Workplace amenities and work environment*

**Note:** This guidance material has been prepared using the best information available to the Victorian WorkCover Authority and should be used for general use only. Any information about legislative obligations or responsibilities included in this material is only applicable to the circumstances described in the material. You should always check the legislation referred to in this material and make your own judgement about what action you may need to take to ensure you have complied with the law. Accordingly, the Victorian WorkCover Authority cannot be held responsible and extends no warranties as to the suitability of the information for your specific circumstances; or actions taken by third parties as a result of information contained in the guidance material.

WorkSafe Victoria is a trading name of the Victorian WorkCover Authority.