

# It's best to be prepared!

Living in California means living with the reality that a major **earthquake** can hit at any minute. Preparing for such an event will help you get safely through a disaster.

We depend so much on household utilities for both comfort and security that it's hard to imagine living without them. But, putting all comfort aside, there's one household utility that offers more than simple comfort; it also protects your health and the environment around you. That household utility is your sewer system.

Knowing what to do if your sewer system becomes damaged or inoperable will not only help you get through a disaster such as an earthquake, it will also help protect your health and the environment.

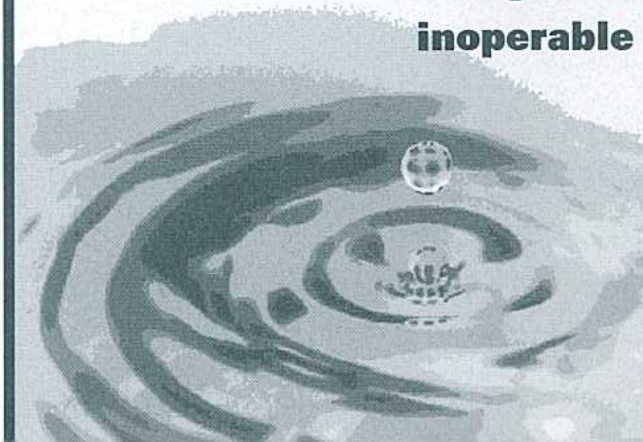


# Checklist for an EMERGENCY provisional toilet

- 5-gallon plastic bucket with a tight-fitting lid
- 2 boxes heavy-duty trash can liners (8-10 gallon size) with ties
- 1 gallon liquid chlorine bleach or other toilet disinfectant
- 2 boxes baking soda
- 2 large boxes heavy-duty trash can liners (30-gallon size) with ties
- 6-8 rolls toilet paper
- Hand sanitizer to clean and disinfect hands without water
- Feminine products
- Paper towels
- Moist towelettes or baby wipes



**What to do  
if your sewer  
system becomes  
damaged or  
inoperable**



# Importance of your household sewer system

In the event of a major disaster such as an earthquake, the sewer system in your area may become damaged or inoperable. Damaged sewer systems are health hazards. It is important to get damaged septic tanks, cesspools, pits and leaching systems into service as soon as possible. Trained personnel from local environmental regulatory agencies can help with these problems.

If your local sewer system becomes inoperable, there are proper procedures you can use to temporarily replace your toilet and safely dispose of sewage while service is being restored. In our continuing effort to protect public health and the environment, the Orange County Sanitation District has prepared the following step-by-step plan to assist you if an earthquake or any other disaster causes your local sewer system to fail. We recommend that you keep these guidelines close at hand because you never know when you might need them.



## How to create a provisional toilet

**1** If sewage lines are broken but the toilet bowl is usable, place a trash can liner inside the bowl and follow the disinfectant procedures below.

If the toilet is completely backed up, use a bucket with a trash can liner and make a toilet seat out of two boards placed parallel to each other across the bucket. For greater comfort, you can remove the seat from your household toilet and place it on the bucket.

**2** Every time you use the provisional toilet, pour or sprinkle a small amount of regular household disinfectant, such as chlorine bleach (**DO NOT** mix chlorine with other disinfectants as it can produce a dangerous chemical reaction), baking soda or laundry detergent to keep down odors and germs.

**3** Cover the container tightly when not in use and replace the trash can liner when waste has accumulated. **NEVER use a provisional toilet that is not lined with a plastic bag!**



## ...and safely dispose of sewage

**4** After using the provisional toilet, you will need another container to empty the contents for later disposal. The second container should be lined with a 30-gallon size trash can liner. As bags from the provisional toilet fill up, they should be placed in the second container for safe disposal.

**NEVER deposit human waste or garbage on the open ground.** This will not only pollute the environment but it can also create a serious health hazard.

If you have **no other** alternative for disposal, it is safe to bury waste in trenches 24-30 inches deep.

