



Safety Meeting Outline



SMO 08-1003

PORTABLE TOILETS

By SeaBright Insurance Loss Control

Portable toilets are one of those items that appear by magic. Someone in the contractor's office knows the toilets are needed and whom to call. Often, once they are on site, very little thought is given to them — until you need one. Why should you have any more than a passing interest?

- First, they are required by OSHA, with several states having additional requirements.
- Secondly, their presence can create safety considerations.

The OSHA requirements for jobsite toilets are found in [29 C.F.R. § 1910.141(a)(3)]. These are very simple. If there are people on the jobsite, toilets are needed. A minimum of one toilet is required for each 15 employees or a fraction thereof for each gender on site. In other words if you have 14 men and 1 woman working on site you must have **two** toilets, one being clearly marked for women. Separate toilets are required for each sex unless the jobsite has less than five employees. The door on the unit(s) that is provided must be lockable for privacy. Speaking of privacy, those half-high units sometimes found in high-rise projects would probably not meet the intent of providing privacy. If such units are used, a suitable level of privacy might be attained by enclosing the unit with partitions and a lockable door.

By its very nature, construction work is dirty and the construction worker's hands are often dirty or contaminated. Many times, it may be desirable or advisable for hand washing to occur both before and after using the restroom. Yet, there are still many jobsites without facilities to do this. OSHA requires that wash stations are on site. This standard is in line with the standard for toilets in that it requires a wash station whenever employees are on site and that a minimum be provided for a set number of employees. A wash station is considered a sink, a faucet, a towel dispenser and a soap dispenser. As a rule, the wash station cannot be contained within the portable toilet. It must be outside and not attached to the toilet facility. The exception to this rule is that when there are less than five employees on site, and only one toilet is required, the wash station may be located in the unit. The wash station must be located and arranged so that any time a toilet is used; the user can readily wash. In all instances, both the toilet facility and the wash station must be kept clean. The toilet must be stocked with toilet paper and the wash station with adequate water, soap, and single use towels. While not a regulation, for the sake of jobsite housekeeping, do not forget to provide a trash can for the used towels.

Nothing in the regulations, dictates where portable toilets and wash station needs to be located. Common sense would say that they should be located conveniently and this is where the safety considerations come into play. Each person is going to be using the facilities several times a day. You do not want the placement of the facilities to create a dangerous situation. Do not leave placement to the discretion of the vendor's delivery driver. For stability, the units should be placed on a leveled pad. The approach path to the units needs to be clear of obstructions, scrap, cobbles, potholes, and other hazardous walking surface conditions. If the walkway is muddy, consider some sort of cover as small rock or gravel. Pallets placed in front of the entry are not considered an acceptable method of keeping people out of the mud. Try to place the units so that the user does not need to cross a street or haul road to get access. If they have to cross a road, they

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could be struck by a vehicle or mobile equipment. It is not a good idea to allow any material to be stockpiled near the units. Doing so unnecessarily places forklifts and loaders in close proximity to any user, increasing the chance that they might be struck by such equipment. While it may be desirable to place the units as close to the actual worksite itself, do not place it so close that material falling or thrown off a structure could strike the port-a-potty.

It is recognized that not all worksites are fixed. Street and road contractors, underground contractors, and others may have a site that is constantly on the move. In such circumstances, toilets for mobile crews are not required if transportation to nearby toilets is available.

Can there be a direct connection between safety and the existence of usable toilet facilities? Let us answer that by drawing on an experience we have all had.

- When you really have to go; when the need is best described as being urgent, have you been able to concentrate on the task or is your attention focused elsewhere?
- Do you rush?
- Take shortcuts?
- Moreover, how often have we seen injuries result from the same issues – not paying attention, rushing, taking shortcuts?

For regulatory compliance and safety, proper toilet and washing facilities need to be more than an afterthought.



SAFETY MEETING AGENDA

DEPARTMENT/JOB SITE: _____ MEETING DATE: _____

1. **Open Meeting & Present safety topic:** _____
2. Read minutes from previous meeting.
3. **Persons present:**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

4. **Old Business** – Status of previous recommendations. Discuss pending old business if any.

5. **Accidents** – Discuss accidents and near misses that have occurred since the last meeting. Brief summary of accidents to date by number and type. Note any trends. Discuss corrective action taken, or needed. Concentrate on accident causes to make everyone more aware.

6. **Inspection Reports** – Report on findings and recommendations of any inspection reports made since last meeting.

7. **New Business** – Solicit employee suggestions. Discuss new procedures, changes to company safety policy, etc.

TIME MEETING STARTED: _____ TIME FINISHED: _____
MEETING CHAIRED BY: _____ TITLE: _____