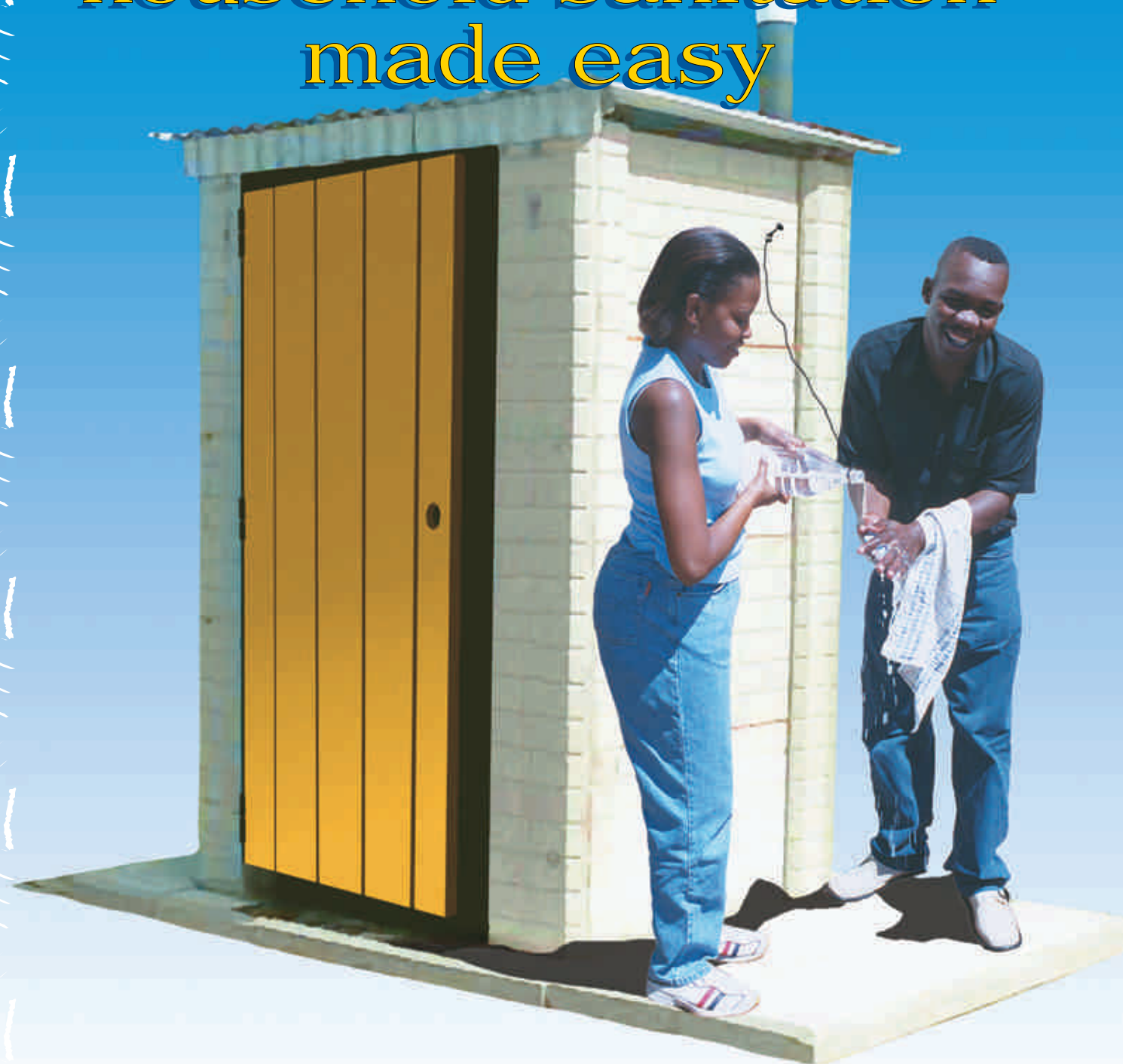


SANITATION

FOR A HEALTHY NATION

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The policy on basic household sanitation made easy



Department: Water Affairs and Forestry
Your partner in creating a better life for all

National Sanitation Task Team

Department: Water Affairs and Forestry, Health, Education, Provincial and Local Government,
Housing, Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Public Works, Treasury

SANITATION

F O R A H E A L T H Y N A T I O N



What is sanitation and why does it matter?

There are 18 million South Africans (in 3 million households) who do not have access to basic sanitation at present. An estimated 15% of clinics and 11,7% of schools are without sanitation. Many other schools use pit latrines that are inadequate, dirty and unsafe. This all adds up to a potential health time bomb. The government will therefore support communities and households in wiping out the sanitation backlog by 2010.

What does 'sanitation' mean?

Sanitation means collecting and disposing - in a hygienic manner - of waste, including human excreta, household waste water and rubbish. If this is not done, neighbourhoods become dirty and people get sick. In South Africa we already have 1,5 million cases of diarrhoea (runny stomach) each year in children under 5, as well as outbreaks of cholera. This must be accompanied by good hygienic behavioral practices.

Why do we have a problem?

South Africa's sanitation problem has two main causes:

- Poor hygiene (many people don't realise that they need to wash their hands after defecating or changing nappies, and many think it's fine to use the veld as a toilet),
- Lack of infrastructure (no toilets and no water for hand washing).

What is the solution?

Providing improved toilets is one part of the answer. At the same time there has to be improved community knowledge of health matters, improved hygiene and community participation in sanitation programmes.

What is the minimum acceptable basic level of sanitation?

- Appropriate hygiene such as keeping toilets clean and washing hands after handling waste or visiting a toilet.
- A system for disposing of human excreta, waste water and rubbish which is affordable, easy to maintain, safe and environmentally acceptable.
- An adequate toilet for each household.

What will the basic household sanitation policy achieve?

Government has a constitutional responsibility to ensure that all South Africans have access to adequate sanitation. The policy will therefore focus on providing adequate sanitation for households, schools and clinics, improving household waste collection and disposal, and educating the public about hygiene.

Government plans to facilitate improved service delivery by supporting communities in providing and using sustainable (affordable, community-run) sanitation services. Key focus areas will include rural, peri-urban and informal settlements where the need is greatest.

Sanitation is vital to national health. To achieve good sanitation, the matter needs to be part of an overall development drive. Sanitation is thus *only one* of many development programmes being promoted by government. Success also depends on community support. Sanitation capacity must urgently be built in communities so that citizens are empowered to contribute to the national sanitation programme.

Sanitation programmes will improve the social and psychological problems associated with poor sanitation. Lack of toilet facilities, toilets placed at a distance from the home, inadequate communal facilities, inadequate disposal of waste and other poor sanitation practices result in loss of privacy and dignity, exposure and increased risks to personal safety.

Why is sanitation important?

Sanitation is vital for good health. Health problems associated with poor sanitation include diarrhoea, dysentery, typhoid, cholera, malaria, bilharzia, worm infestations, eye infections, skin diseases and increased infections in HIV positive people. Good sanitation leads to increased life expectancy.

Sanitation is also vital for wealth creation. Economic benefits of improved sanitation include savings in health costs, higher worker productivity, better school attendance, improved tourism and reduced water treatment costs. (Source: *White Paper on Basic Household Sanitation*)

Who is responsible for better sanitation?

The improvement of sanitation is **everybody's business**. Roleplayers include communities and households (first and foremost); community-based contractors; local, provincial and national government; the private sector and NGOs.

Constitutional responsibilities:

- Municipalities must provide access to basic services, including sanitation.
- National and provincial government must support municipalities with legislation and other measures.

Roles and responsibilities Households and communities

Households and communities are responsible first and foremost for their own health, a clean environment and improved sanitation. Wrong hygiene practices can jeopardize their own health and the health of the community and the nation. The following steps can be taken to improve hygiene practices:

- Washing hands after using the toilet, before handling food and after changing babies' nappies.
- Spreading the message of good hygiene and the importance of sanitation.
- Alerting local government of sanitation-related needs.
- Assisting local government in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating sanitation projects.
- Reporting faulty sanitation systems and sanitation risks to the environment to local government.
- Ensuring that toilet facilities are always clean and in good working order.

Households have to provide their own sanitation facilities. Local government will assist households to do this through:

- Community-based programmes whereby local builders are trained to build safe and hygienic toilet facilities. These local builders will assist households to construct their own toilet facilities.
- Supplying the essential components to ensure that the toilet facility is hygienic, safe and accessible.

Local government will provide guidelines for households to dig their own pits and build their own top structure.

At different levels of government

Local government

Local government planning takes place through the Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) - of which the Water Service Development Plans (WSDPs) are a component. In order to implement sanitation improvement programmes, local government must budget and source funding for this purpose. The funding arises from various sources, including revenue collection and provincial and national government. Local government must also plan and budget for the operation and maintenance of sanitation systems. It is also responsible for assisting households to provide their own sanitation and to build their own toilet facilities. Specific responsibilities include:

- Providing access to sanitation.
- Making communities aware of the importance of sanitation in terms of health.
- Launching, together with the communities, health and hygiene promotion programmes.
- Monitoring the health of communities.
- Assisting households to operate and maintain sanitation facilities.

Provincial government

Provincial government must provide finance, human resources and technical support to local government. It must also ensure compliance with national policy, develop enabling legislation, co-ordinate regional planning and monitor progress.

National government

National government must establish legislation and standards; guide, co-ordinate and monitor national programmes; provide support to other levels of government; regulate service provision and intervene where there is lack of capacity.

Key government departments

Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) is the custodian of the nation's water and the lead department in the sanitation sector. In partnership with other national role players DWAF must develop sanitation standards, support provinces and municipalities in developing sanitation services, monitor outcomes, build capacity, provide financial support, undertake pilot projects in low cost sanitation and make sure that sanitation is implemented in a co-ordinated manner. The Department renders support to local government in developing their Water Services Development Plans, which is a component of the Integrated Development Plans.

Department of Provincial and Local Government will take primary responsibility for promoting the Integrated Development Plans of municipalities, ensuring that provincial and local governments have sufficient capacity, providing Equitable Share and municipal infrastructure grants, and monitoring.

Department of Health will co-ordinate information on public health, create a demand for sanitation through hygiene awareness programmes, prepare health norms for sanitation, support municipalities, provide training materials and educate communities on hygiene.

National Treasury supports local governments in planning and managing their funding.

National Housing develops standards for housing development (the minimum level for sanitation is a VIP per household unless soil conditions dictate otherwise). It also co-ordinates the housing subsidy administered by the provincial housing departments.

National Department of Education is responsible for developing curricula and standards, ensuring funding, information and capacity building. The **provincial departments** are responsible for the improvement of school infrastructure, including sanitation, and for implementing the Health Promoting Schools Programme to create safe and healthy schools.

Department of Public Works acts as the implementing agent on behalf of national and provincial government when schools and clinics are constructed. This department has a responsibility to ensure that adequate sanitation is installed in government and public buildings. The department is also responsible for implementing the community-based public works programme.

Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism is responsible for protecting the environment and will develop standards relating to the impact of sanitation on the environment and for monitoring impacts and compliance with environmental management procedures.



Other roleplayers

The private sector

Government cannot address the sanitation backlog alone. The private sector, especially **business**, can manufacture and install sanitation systems, partner with municipalities in service provision and provide finance.

Non government organisations

These organisations can help with hygiene awareness programmes, facilitate community participation, develop community-based construction teams and implement and monitor projects.

How will this all be co-ordinated?

- At **local level** the District Municipality or Metro or Local Municipality will have primary responsibility for implementation through the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) of which the Water Services Development Plan (WSDP) is part.
- At **provincial level**, provincial government will lend support through the Provincial Sanitation Co-ordinating Forums.
- At **national level**, co-ordination is achieved through the National Sanitation Task Team (NSTT) which will be re-established as a sub-committee of the Municipal Infrastructure Task Team (MITT). DWAF acts as lead department.

What are the time frames?

The White Paper on Basic Household Sanitation was approved by Cabinet in September 2001. At the same time the Framework for a National Sanitation Strategy was also approved. The Framework is currently being communicated to stakeholders including district and local municipalities, NGOs, implementing agents, provincial government and any interested and affected members of public. The document is available on the internet on www.dwaf.gov.za. Provincial and local strategies will be developed before July 2002. The Framework recommends that a community development approach be used rather than a contractor driven approach. This will create more jobs and train communities in sanitation skills and project management.

What kinds of toilets are available?

When choosing toilets or sanitation systems, communities must consider affordability, ease of use and maintenance, environmental protection, ability of community-based contractors to implement systems and how much the systems will improve health. Each system listed only works if users have been educated on correct use. Otherwise, toilets break down, smell bad, attract insects and breed germs. The last three options listed below are not recommended for household use. Cost indicated is estimated only and will vary according to local conditions.

Unimproved pit toilet (unhygienic and not recommended): A top structure over a pit. Costs vary.

Ventilated improved pit (VIP) toilet: A top structure over a pit, vented by a pipe with a fly screen. The pit may be lined or unlined depending on soil conditions. Costs start at R600 to build and R60 per year to empty the waste if emptied once in five years.

Ventilated improved double pit (VIDP) toilet: A single top structure over two shallow pits side by side. Only one pit is in use at a time and each is vented by a pipe with a fly screen. Pits are generally lined and the central wall is sealed. Costs begin at R2 500 to install and R35 per year to operate and maintain.

Composting toilets, including urine diversion and desiccating systems: A single top structure over a sealed container with access for removal of composted waste. Urine may be diverted and a vent pipe helps dry the waste, especially for desiccating systems. Costs begin at R3 000 for commercial systems and operation and maintenance costs at R35 per year.

Pour-flush latrine or aqua-privy: A toilet with water-seal. Waste is washed away through a short pipe or chute to a waste collecting and soakaway disposal system. The privy is accepted internationally where users squat and water is used for anal cleansing. It fails when people throw unauthorised objects in to the toilet, or there is no affordable emptying service. Installation begins at R2 000 and removal costs at R150 per year.

Septic tank and soakaway: An in-house full flush toilet connected via plumbing to a watertight underground digester (settling chamber) with liquids allowed to soak into the ground. Costs to install begin at R7 000 and annual costs at R200, depending on how often it is emptied.

Flush toilets with conservancy tanks: Waste is flushed into a tank from where it cannot flow into the surrounding environment and which must therefore be emptied. Costs depend on the size of tank and how often it is emptied.

Small bore solids-free sewer: An in-house flush toilet discharging to a septic tank where solids settle out. Liquids go through a small sewer into a central collection sump or existing sewer. Costs depend on size of tank and how often it is emptied.

Full bore waterborne sewerage: An in-house flush toilet which connects to sewer which, in turn, flows to a waste water treatment plant. This costs R6 000 to install and operating costs are about R400 per year.



Shallow sewerage: An in-house toilet flushed with less water than usual and through smaller pipes at shallower levels with on-site inspection chambers. Internationally this saves up to 50% on water use but is still being tested in South Africa.

Chemical toilets: Stand-alone units which use chemicals to render excreta harmless and odourless. Expensive and generally used as temporary. Most authorities are trying to discontinue their use.

Bucket toilet (unhygienic and not recommended): A top structure with a seat over a bucket. The bucket is periodically removed and contents disposed of. Widely used but poses health risk to collectors. Most authorities are trying to discontinue these - and they are expensive to operate and maintain.

Communal toilets (not recommended for household use): Toilet blocks may be based on wet or dry systems. These require regular cleaning and maintenance.

Potential sources of funding

There are three main sources of funding for sanitation improvement: the Equitable Share subsidy, infrastructure grants and municipalities' own revenue. Part of the housing subsidy can also be used for sanitation.

Equitable Share

This subsidy from national government to local government covers the operating costs of free basic services to the very poor.

Grants

The Municipal Infrastructure Investment Grant will fund residential properties. Currently DWAF provides a once-off sanitation subsidy of R300 for community development and R900 for a basic toilet structure (this was preceded by R600 for community development and R600 for infrastructure).

Municipalities' own revenue

Government is giving attention to cost recovery in providing sanitation services. Municipalities set their own tariffs after providing the very poor with a free basic level of service.

Consolidated Municipal Infrastructure Programme (CMIP)

CMIP is funding on-site sanitation as well as bulk and connector infrastructure in urban and rural areas.

Housing subsidies

Currently each household can obtain a once-off subsidy of R16 000 in formalised townships which is used to obtain land, build houses and provide infrastructure such as toilets. People who have informal land rights to property they occupy may also qualify for the subsidy. A rural housing improvement grant is also being proposed.

How will the various funds be co-ordinated?

The Integrated Development Plan (IDP) will be used as an interim mechanism to integrate funding and make sure there are no overlaps.

Basic Sanitation Policy Principles

1. Sanitation must respond to the demands of communities and should link to **improved hygiene awareness**. For people to benefit from sanitation improvements, everybody must understand the link between their own health, good hygiene and toilet facilities.
2. Communities must be fully involved in projects. DWAF is only the regulator. **Citizens have rights but also responsibilities** in taking charge of their own health.
3. Sanitation must be provided **in conjunction with water supply** and other municipal services.
4. Sanitation is more than just toilets; it must be **accompanied by environmental and health education**.
5. Access to basic sanitation is **a human right**.
6. Local government has the **constitutional responsibility** to provide access to sanitation services.
7. Scarce public **funds must be prioritised** to help those most at risk.
8. Limited national **funds should be fairly distributed** throughout the country.
9. **Water has an economic value** and must be protected through sanitation.
10. **Polluters must pay** to clean up the water and the environment they have polluted.
11. Sanitation must be **financially sustainable**.
12. The **environment must be protected** when sanitation systems are set up and run.

Who can be contacted?

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