OBSERVATION CHECKLIST:

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR INCLUSIVE, SAFE BATHING AREAS

**Global WASH tools** / IFRC / V.3 October 2021

OVERVIEW

This tool is an observation checklist[[1]](#footnote-2) with minimum standards for inclusive, safe and accessible communal bathing areas. Bathing areas may also be used for laundering and drying menstrual materials, depending on the context. They are aligned with PGI's minimum standards for WASH.

You can use this checklist for:

1. **Design**: WASH technical staff/engineers can use them to ensure they have included key aspects on safety and inclusion in their designs.
2. **Assessment**: to find out if existing WASH facilities are safe and inclusive (e.g. assess if they meet these minimum standards), to understand what is missing and what changes/adaptations need to be made to the facilities.
3. **Monitoring**: to track progress towards WASH facilities becoming safe, inclusive and accessible, and measuring improvements during an operation or program.

**What do these terms mean?**

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| Inclusive  | Inclusive means that latrines are designed to ensure the dignity, access, participation and safety of all persons in the community using the facilities. |
| Accessible  | Accessible means that people with disabilities, older people and pregnant women have access to the physical and built environment, information and communications, and to related facilities and services.  |
| Safety  | Safety means that the bathing area can be used day and night by all users, without embarrassment and stress, and that using the bathing area does not bring any risk of violence,  |
| MHM-friendly  | MHM-friendly means that the WASH facility meets the minimum requirements that ensure women and girls can privately, safely and hygienically manage their monthly menstruation.  |

***Bonus!*** *At the end there are also questions to ask to get direct feedback from women and girls, persons with disabilities[[2]](#footnote-3).*

Minimum standard checklist for inclusive, safe communal bathing areas

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| **DIRECT OBSERVATION**  |
| **Minimum standard to check** | **Yes/No** | **Action or change needed to meet standard**  |
|  | Male and female bathing areas are physically separated and have clear signs (for female/male/all user). [*They should never be back to back*.] |  |  |
|  | The walls have no holes, or gaps at bottom or between walls allow others to see in. |  |  |
|  | Every door has an internal lock (or latch).  |  |  |
|  | There is an opening or gap on the upper part of the bathing facility. [*As a protection measure for child safety*.] |  |  |
|  | The bathing facility has lighting in and around it. *[If they are used/open at night.]*  |  | *Torches may have been distributed – check with PGI, relief.* |
|  | There is a hook and/or shelf inside the bathing area, at a height accessible for girls and persons using a wheelchair. |  |  |
|  | Water is available close to or at the bathing area. *[Sphere standard: <500 metres from household to water point.]* |  | *May need to ask community, if it unable to be seen.*  |
|  | There are racks, hangers or shelves for drying menstrual materials (e.g. cloth or reusable pads). [*If relevant for the context, otherwise delete this question.]* |  |  |
|  | The floor is clean with no menstrual waste, faeces or other material. |  |  |
|  | There is a waste bin, chute (or other method of disposal) for menstrual waste inside the latrine. [*For all user, or female latrines*.] |  |  |
|  | The wastewater drains into gravel (or similar) and drain outlets are covered *(to ensure privacy for wastewater which may be pink or red tinged from washing menstrual materials).* |  |  |
|  | There are no muddy areas or standing water inside the bathing area.  |  |  |
|  | The path leading to the bathing facility is not slippery, has no large obstacles (e.g. steps, holes, rocks) and is an even surface. |  |  |
|  | Minimum requirements for accessibility: | * at ground level or has a 90cm wide ramp of <1:10 slope
 |  | *Target = at least 10% of all communal bathing areas; or, if there is only one communal bathing facility then it should be accessible (e.g. meet all minimum requirements outlined).* |
| * has 90cm wide doors that open outwards
 |
| * has a bar to pull the door shut from inside
 |
| * has a seat
 |
| * has handrails for support
 |
| * is clearly signposted to be accessible.
 |
|  | Water source for bathing is accessible to persons with mobility limitations.  |  | *Target = at least 10% of all facilities* |
|  | Products and items for cleaning the bathing area are located close by (or inside) *[if applicable, adapt based on context]*. |  |  |
| *Additional non-essential improvements:*  |  |  |
|  | The entrance to the latrines are screened for privacy (*depends on culture and context*). |  |  |
|  | There is a poster or sign inside the latrine with instructions on how to dispose of menstrual waste. *If yes:* The poster/sign is in easy-to-understand language and includes pictures/pictograms. |  |  |
|  | There is a mirror (in a low position) inside the bathing area *(for women and girls check clothing for blood stains)*.  |  |  |
|  | Direct access to water inside each bathing cubicle/stall. *[Ideal case but not always possible]* |  |  |

***Bonus!*** Get more information from FGDs or interviews – so you can revise the latrine designs, siting, or operation and maintenance strategy! Use the questions below to help:

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| **FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH WOMEN AND GIRLS, PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES:**  |
| **Minimum standard to check** | **Yes/No** | **Action needed to meet standard**  |
|  | Are people following the gender segregation instructions for bathing areas? *(E.g. are males only using male bathing area)* |  |  |
|  | Do you feel that the bathing areas are located in an appropriate and accessible place? Why or why not?  |  |  |
|  | Do you feel comfortable and safe using the bathing area in the day and at night (if relevant)? Is there enough privacy? Why or why not? |  |  |
|  | Is there always water available near or at the facility to bathe and to wash menstrual materials? Where is water sourced?  |  |  |
|  | Where do you wash and dry your menstrual materials (if using reusable pads or cloth) and underwear? Why?  |  |  |
|  | Do you feel comfortable changing, washing/drying and disposing of your menstrual materials? Why or why not? How could it be improved? |  |  |
|  | Who is responsible for cleaning and maintaining the bathing area? Are there any challenges keeping it clean? How can it be improved?  |  |  |

1. Adapted from Global toolkit for integrating Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) into humanitarian response, and developed further with input from IFRCs operational research, and National Society experiences. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Note that only key discussion points are included here; more in-depth monitoring of WASH programming should be done (see the full MHM guide [Step 7], Tool 1, Tool 11 and Tool 13 for more guidance). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)