OBSERVATION CHECKLIST:

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR INCLUSIVE, SAFE LATRINES

**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 latrines, including public (e.g. markets) and institutional (e.g. schools) latrines. 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 latrines can be used day and night by all users, without embarrassment and stress, and that using the latrines does not bring any risk of violence,  |
| MHM-friendly  | MHM-friendly means that the latrine 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 and whoever is responsible for emptying, collecting or transferring menstrual waste[[2]](#footnote-3).*

Minimum standard checklist for inclusive, safe communal latrines

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| **DIRECT OBSERVATION**  |
| **Minimum standard to check** | **Yes/No** | **Action or change needed to meet standard**  |
|  | The male and female latrines are physically separated and have clear signs (for female/male). [*They should never be back to back*.] |  |  |
|  | The walls have no holes, or gaps at bottom or between walls allow others to see in.  |  |  |
|  | There is an opening or gap on the upper part of the latrine. [*As a protection measure for child safety*.]  |  |  |
|  | Every door has an internal lock (or latch).  |  |  |
|  | The latrine has lighting in and around the facilities. *[If they are open at night[[3]](#footnote-4).]*  |  | *Torches may have been distributed – check with PGI, relief.*  |
|  | There is a working hand-washing facility located nearby.  |  |  |
|  | The hand-washing facility has water available. |  |  |
|  | There is soap available or in an accessible place near the handwashing facility.  |  |  |
|  | The hand-washing facility is accessible to persons with physical disabilities, and children.  |  | *Target = at least 10% of all communal hand-washing facilities*  |
|  | There is a hook and/or shelf inside the latrine, at a height accessible for girls and persons using a wheelchair *(to place personal sanitary items off the floor)*  |  |  |
|  | There is a waste bin, chute (or other method of disposal) for menstrual waste inside the latrine. [*For all user, or female latrines*.]  |  |  |
|  | The floor is clean with no menstrual waste, faeces or other material.  |  |  |
|  | The path leading to the latrine 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 latrines; or, if there is only one communal, public or institutional latrine 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 space for a wheelchair to turn inside
 |
| * has seating/commode for the toilet
 |
| * has handrails on both sides of the toilet seat
 |
| * is clearly signposted to be accessible
 |
|  | There is a poster or sign inside the latrine with instructions on disposal of menstrual waste. *If yes:* Is the poster/sign in easy-to-understand, local language and including pictures?  |  |  |
|  | Products and items for cleaning the latrine 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 mirror (in a low position) inside the latrine *(for women and girls check clothing for blood stains)* |  |  |
|  | There is water available inside the latrine cubicle or stall (e.g. bucket or hand-washing facility). *[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 latrines? *(E.g. are males only using male latrines)*  |  |  |
|  | Do you feel that the latrines are located in an appropriate and accessible place? Why or why not?  |  |  |
|  | Do you feel comfortable and safe using the latrines in the day and at night (if relevant)? Is there enough privacy? Why or why not? |  |  |
|  | Is there always water available near the latrine to wash hands and menstrual materials? Where is water sourced? Who is responsible for filling the water container?  |  |  |
|  | 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 the latrine? Are there any challenges keeping the latrine clean? How can it be improved?  |  |  |
|  | Who is responsible for emptying the menstrual waste bins (*if relevant*)? Do you use the system? Why or why not? How can it be improved? |  |  |

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| **FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH WHOEVER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR EMPTYING or COLLECTING or TRANSFERING MENSTRUAL WASTE:**  |
| **Minimum standard to check** | **Yes/No** | **Action needed to meet standard**  |
|  | Do you ever find used menstrual products or waste in or around the latrine cubicles? *Why do you think this is?*  |  |  |
|  | Do you wear gloves and boots when handling menstrual waste? *Why or why not?* |  |  |
|  | Is there any informal or formal waste sorting done? *Who does this? Where?*  |  |  |
|  | Do you face any taboos, restrictions or teasing from your work (including handling menstrual waste)? *What are they? Do you have any suggestions to mitigate them?*  |  |  |
|  | Did you receive a training about your work and how to be safe? *What information did you think was missing or would you have liked?*  |  |  |

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)
3. For example, school latrines are not used at night so this question is not relevant. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)