OBSERVATION CHECKLIST:

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR INCLUSIVE, SAFE SOLID WASTE FACILITIES

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OVERVIEW

The solid waste chain includes waste collection (often in containers or bins), emptying and transfer, and final disposal (through burying, burning or incineration, or composting).

This tool is observation checklists[[1]](#footnote-1) for three different types of facilities, focussing on aspects of waste collection where the main concerns are privacy and convenience for women and girls, and persons with disabilities to dispose of menstrual waste:

1. Waste collection containers *(in communal facilities, not individual households)*
2. Communal waste pits
3. Incinerators *(e.g. a school latrine block with incinerator attached)*

You can use these checklists 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 WASH facility can be used day and night by all users, without embarrassment and stress, and that using it 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 and whoever is responsible for emptying, collecting or transferring menstrual waste[[2]](#footnote-2).*

Minimum standard checklist for inclusive, safe communal solid waste facilities

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| **DIRECT OBSERVATION** | | | |
| **Minimum standard to check** | | **Yes/No** | **Action or change needed to meet standard** |
| ***For communal waste collection containers (bins):*** | | | |
|  | The container(s) have a lid. |  |  |
|  | The container(s) are washable and easy to clean. |  |  |
|  | The containers are in a discrete location (preferably inside each latrine). |  |  |
|  | The containers are clearly identified for menstrual waste disposal (and not for other types of waste e.g. plastic bottles) using pictures and easy-to-understand local language. |  |  |
|  | Waste collection container is easy to carry (***if*** it has to be transferred to a disposal site). |  |  |
|  | There is no menstrual waste or other rubbish on the floor around the waste collection container. |  |  |
|  | There is a poster or sign near (or on) the waste collection container with instructions on how to dispose of menstrual waste, using pictures and easy-to-understand local language. |  |  |
| ***For communal waste pits (or similar):*** | | | |
|  | The waste pit is not located near, or in view of male communal latrines. |  |  |
|  | The waste pit is not located near areas where men and boys frequently meet or gather. |  |  |
|  | The waste pit is fenced. |  |  |
|  | The waste pit is sufficiently deep so that no one can reach/touch the waste. |  |  |
|  | The waste pit is accessible by persons with mobility limitations:   * Has a 90cm wide ramp with <1:10 slope * the path is a solid surface and not slippery * has handrails (if needed) |  | *Target = at least 10% of all facilities* |
| ***For incinerators – to be modified depending on the context/situation:*** | | | |
|  | The incinerator is attached directly to the latrine block, or is located within 10 metres. |  |  |
|  | Menstrual waste (e.g. used pads) cannot be seen after they have been thrown (or inserted) into the incinerator. |  |  |
|  | The incinerator is accessible for people with mobility limitations:   * Has a 90cm wide ramp with <1:10 slope * the path is a solid surface and is not slippery * has handrails (if needed) |  | *Target = at least 10% of all facilities. If only one incinerator (e.g. in a school), then it should be accessible (e.g. meet all minimum requirements outlined).* |
|  | Incinerator is easy to operate and uses a minimum amount of fuel. |  | *These questions are not observation – ask the person responsible for operation and maintenance.* |
|  | Incinerator can reach a sufficient temperature to burn menstrual materials adequately. |  |
|  | There is system in place for regular burning / operation of the incinerator. |  |
|  | There is system in place for regular maintenance of the incinerator. |  |
|  | The ash from incineration is buried or disposed of in another appropriate way. |  |

***Bonus!*** Get more information from FGDs or interviews – so you can revise the waste facility 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** |
|  | Do you feel comfortable using the waste collection container or disposal mechanism for your menstrual materials? Why or why not? |  |  |
|  | Do you feel the waste collection containers, waste pits (or incinerator) are located in an appropriate and private place? Why or why not? |  |  |
|  | Do women and girls, men and boys with disabilities feel the waste collection containers, waste pits (or incinerator) are located in an appropriate and accessible place? Why or why not? |  |  |
|  | Do you ever feel embarrassed, shy or get teased when disposing of your menstrual waste? Where and why? |  |  |
|  | Who is responsible for emptying the menstrual waste bins? How often do they do it? Where do they put (or transfer) the waste after it has been collected? Is the system working – why or why not, and how can it be improved? *[delete if not relevant]* |  |  |
|  | Who is responsible for burning the waste pit contents? How often do they do it? Is the system working – why or why not, and how can it be improved? *[delete if not relevant]* |  |  |
|  | Who is responsible for burning the incinerator? How often do they do it? Is the system working – why or why not, and how can it be improved? *[delete if not relevant]* |  |  |

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| **FROM 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 Toolkit 3 – Menstrual Hygiene Matters, and developed further with input from IFRCs operational research, and National Society experiences. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
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-2)