

When You Can't Use Your Toilet:

Emergency Toilet Measures
You Should Know in Case of Disaster

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ちょっと
すごく今。



KOTO City in **TOKYO**

Message from the Mayor

In the event of a disaster, it is possible that you will be unable to use your home toilet due not only to suspension of the water supply, but also factors such as power outages, damage to the sewerage system, or damage to your toilet bowl.

In apartment buildings, there is even a risk that flushing a toilet that appears normal will cause the building to flood with sewage if there is damage to the sewerage system.

Waste cannot be flushed when toilets are unusable, worsening the restroom environment regarding odor and sanitation. Serious health hazards have occurred in disaster-affected areas in the past, including outbreaks of infectious diseases like norovirus and chronic dehydration caused by people restricting water intake to reduce toilet use. There have even been reports of these cases leading to disaster-related deaths. Toilet preparations, not just food and water, are also important for the sense of security to continue life in the event of a disaster.

The Koto City Long-term Plan upholds “disaster-resistant urban development so that residents can live with safety and peace of mind” as an important issue for the city, and we are furthering our disaster-prevention measures. This guidebook offers an easy-to-understand introduction to toilet problems and emergency procedures in both apartment buildings and houses so that people can safely shelter in their homes in the event of a disaster.

I hope that residents will read this pamphlet and take this as an opportunity to consider preparations for life in the event of a disaster.



江東区長
大久保朋果
Koto City Mayor
Tomoka Okubo

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Kotomi-chan,
Koto City's
Tourism Mascot

What to Know About Emergency Toilet Procedures in the Event of a Disaster

If there is damage to the sewerage system in your building or on the property, using a flush toilet may cause an overflow of waste from the toilet, or flooding.

It is important to know emergency procedures to prevent these circumstances.

The emergency toilet procedures consist of 5 steps (pictured at right). "1. What to Do Immediately After a Disaster Occurs" is common for both apartment and house residents, but "2. Emergency Inspection Steps" and the steps thereafter differ. Please check the pages relevant to your situation.

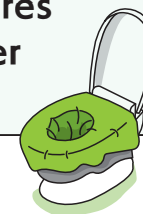
As sewerage systems vary depending on the building, this guidebook provides a general explanation of how to check these systems. It is recommended that you discuss the points of inspection and other important matters with the company that built your home, or your management company, when implementing these steps.



The equipment inspection information in this guidebook is based on the "Guide for Creating a Manual for Toilet Use in Apartment Buildings in the Event of a Disaster" (Subcommittee for Considering Toilet Usage Methods When Sheltering in Place in an Apartment Building; the Society of Heating, Air-Conditioning, and Sanitary Engineers of Japan).



Emergency Toilet Procedures in the Event of a Disaster



1. What to Do Immediately After a Disaster Occurs

Use a portable emergency toilet (portable toilet).

2. Emergency Inspection Steps

Check your toilet equipment and the surroundings of the building.

Normal

Abnormal

3. Functional Inspection Steps

Perform a bucket flush and equipment inspection.

Abnormal

Normal

4. Steps for Provisional Use

Continue the functional inspection steps.

Abnormal

Normal

Use a portable toilet.

5. Steps to Confirm Resumed Use

1. What to Do Immediately After a Disaster Occurs

Portable toilets are bag-type toilets that attach to your toilet bowl for use when there is no running water, or when you cannot flush. An absorbent agent (coagulant, absorbent pad, etc.) hardens solid waste in the bag.

Immediately after a disaster, you will not know whether the plumbing system is damaged. Use a portable toilet initially to avoid sewerage problems.

Choosing a Portable Toilet

When choosing a portable toilet, it is important to know whether the solid waste and urine from one excretion can be properly absorbed and stored. You should also check if the toilet has an odor-proofing function.

You may not know if the toilet is convenient without actually trying to use it, so it is recommended that you try it out once as part of a drill after stockpiling your supply. This way, if you have any trouble, you can reconsider the product and obtain a toilet that makes you feel secure.

Reference:
List of products conforming to standards
for portable toilets (in Japanese)



The NPO Japan Toilet Labo. has created standards for choosing a portable toilet that can be used safely in the event of a disaster and has published a list of products that meet these standards. Feel free to use this as a reference in your preparations.

How to Use a Portable Toilet



*Most portable toilets are generally expected to be used on Western-style (sitting) toilets. Please check beforehand if you would like to use one on a Japanese-style (squat) toilet.

Portable Toilet Disposal Instructions in Koto City

Unused:

Please dispose of these items on burnable garbage collection days. Place them inside the same bag as other burnable garbage for disposal.

Used under normal circumstances (during a drill, etc.):

Flush the solid waste down the toilet after removing the absorbent agent attached to it, and dispose of what is left on burnable garbage collection days. Place them inside the same bag as other burnable garbage for disposal.

Used during a disaster:

Separate used portable toilets from other household garbage and keep them at home until garbage collection resumes. After garbage collection resumes, these items will be prioritized for collection as burnable organic garbage.

References:

- How to Dispose of Garbage in the Event of a Disaster (<https://www.city.koto.lg.jp/381104/kurashi/gomi/haiki/katazukegomi.html>)
- Disaster Waste-Treatment Handbook: What You Can Do at Home (<https://www.city.koto.lg.jp/381104/kurashi/gomi/haiki/handbook.html>)

*Please check your local municipality's garbage disposal guidelines if you are disposing of garbage outside of Koto City.

Emergency Toilet Measures for Apartment Buildings

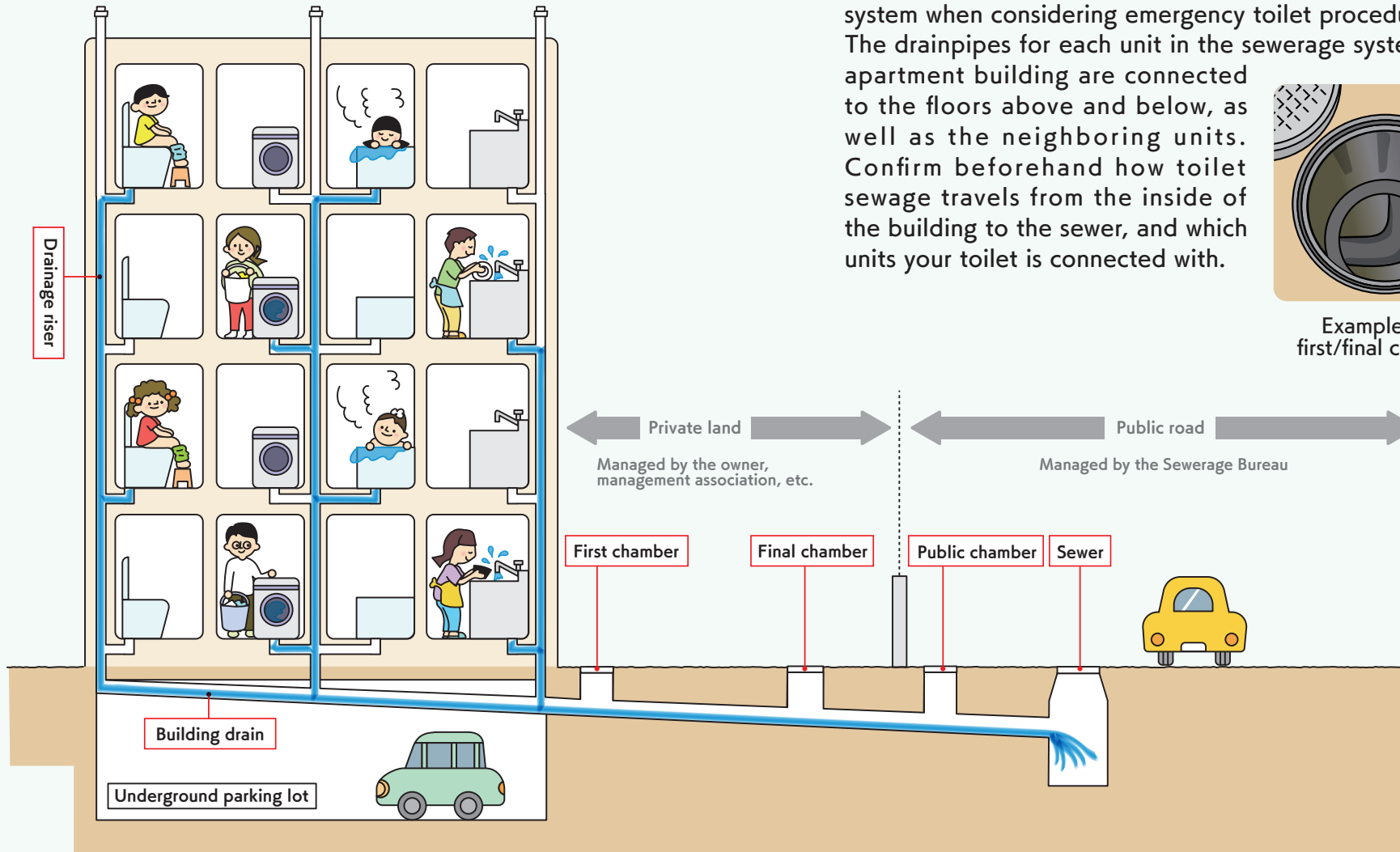


Illustration: Depiction of a sewerage system

In the event of a disaster, it is essential to have a toilet prepared for sheltering at home (sheltering in place). Familiarize yourself with the mechanism of the sewerage system when considering emergency toilet procedures. The drainpipes for each unit in the sewerage system in an apartment building are connected to the floors above and below, as well as the neighboring units. Confirm beforehand how toilet sewage travels from the inside of the building to the sewer, and which units your toilet is connected with.

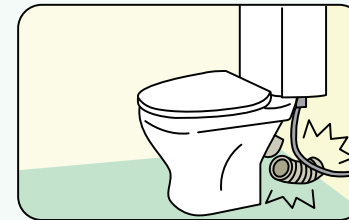
2. Emergency Inspection Steps

After portable toilets are attached, residents and the management association perform a visual inspection for any significant damage to the plumbing system. If there are no problems, proceed to "3. Functional Inspection Steps." If there are problems, continue using the portable toilet. (Refer to the illustrations on the righthand page for item nos. 4-9.)

No.	Example Checklist	☒	Resi dents	Management association
1	Is there a power outage?	☐	☐	☐
2	Are the faucets (taps, etc.) working?	☐	☐	☐
3	Is the toilet bowl damaged?	☐	☐	☐
4	Has the drainpipe behind or around the toilet bowl come unattached?	☐	☐	☐
5	Check the outward appearance of the water tank. Is it damaged?	☐	☐	☐
6	Is the ground swollen or sinking?	☐	☐	☐
7	Are manholes rising due to liquefaction, etc.?	☐	☐	☐
8	Is the first or final chamber damaged?	☐	☐	☐
9	Is the building drain damaged? (Excluding the underground pit)	☐	☐	☐

Points of Inspection

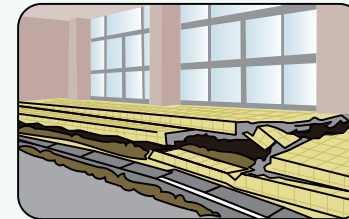
It is necessary to know the normal conditions of the locations and appearances of the inspection points. If anything looks different from normal, the inspection point may be damaged.



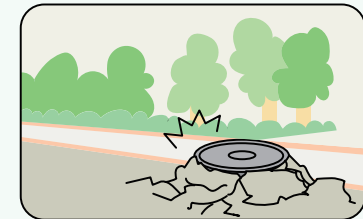
4 Has the drainpipe behind or around the toilet bowl come unattached?



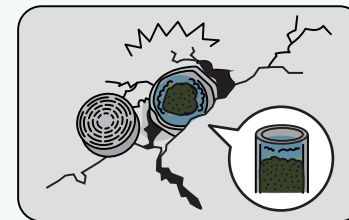
5 Check the outward appearance of the water tank. Is it damaged?



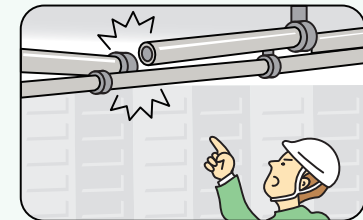
6 Is the ground swollen or sinking?



7 Are manholes rising due to liquefaction, etc.?



8 Is the first or final chamber damaged?



9 Is the building drain damaged? (Excluding the underground pit)

3. Functional Inspection Steps

You may not know there is damage to the sewerage system until you try to flush. If running water is shut off but you can still obtain water, you can remove the portable toilet and begin flushing using a bucket to catch any signs of trouble and minimize damage. If there are any problems, stop bucket flushing and use the portable toilet.

1) Performing a bucket flush Residents

Flush the toilet bowl using a bucket. The amount of water needed will vary depending on the type of toilet bowl. You can flush with about 3-6 liters of water if you pour the water carefully. Toilet paper can clog the pipes, so please dispose of it as burnable garbage.

Tips for bucket flushing

Using a bucket is recommended, as other containers like a plastic bottle cannot flush enough water at once. Pour the water quickly to push solid waste and urine to the back of the toilet bowl. The trick is to pour the water so it hits any solid waste directly.

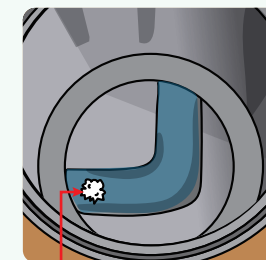


2) Catching signs of trouble

Checking the first chamber

Management association

Open the cover of the first chamber and check the sewerage flow. Insert wadded toilet paper and wait a bit to see if it is flushed. If the toilet paper is still there, you can assume there is a problem with the sewerage system.

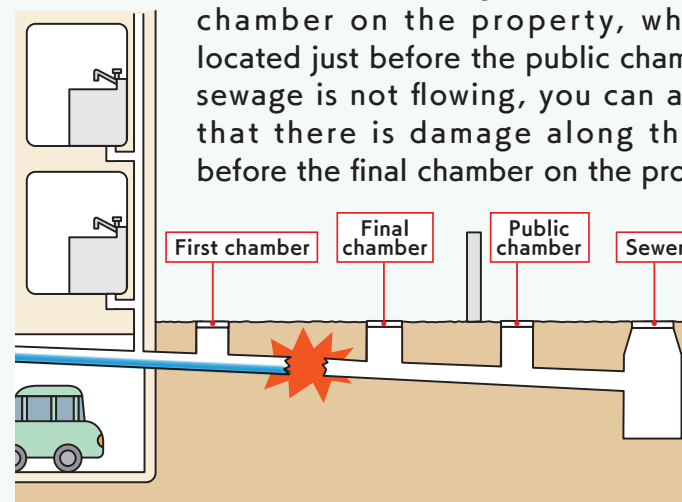


Insert toilet paper.

Inspecting the final chamber

Management association

Check the sewerage flow in the final chamber on the property, which is located just before the public chamber. If sewage is not flowing, you can assume that there is damage along the line before the final chamber on the property.



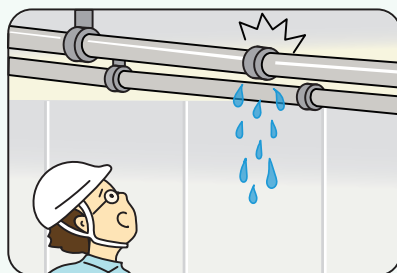
OR

Other inspections (functional inspection steps)

Building drain

Management association

Check the building drain for damage and leaks only if you can do so visually. Do not enter the underground pit, as it is dangerous inside.



Overhead and exposed pipes

Residents

Seepage or other signs will appear if there is any damage to pipes in the ceiling, etc. Check visually for damage and leaks if any parts of the drainage riser or building drain are exposed.



Toilet bowl

Residents

Leave the lid of the toilet bowl closed, then check whether the underside of the lid is wet from water splashing out. There could be a problem if it is wet, so use a portable toilet.



4. Steps for Provisional Use

Even if the sewerage system is damaged, you may be able to perform "3. Functional Inspection Steps" without issues, and some problem may arise after continued bucket flushing.

In "4. Steps for Provisional Use," continue bucket flushing in the same way as described in "3. Functional Inspection Steps." If there is any problem, stop using your toilet and use a portable toilet instead.

5. Steps to Confirm Resumed Use

The plumbing system may be damaged even if power and water are restored.

Determine in advance the procedure to follow when power and water are restored, and which specialist you will contact. Repairs vary depending on the damage, so consult your management company, etc.; have a disaster damage survey done; and consider asking a specialist to make the repairs.



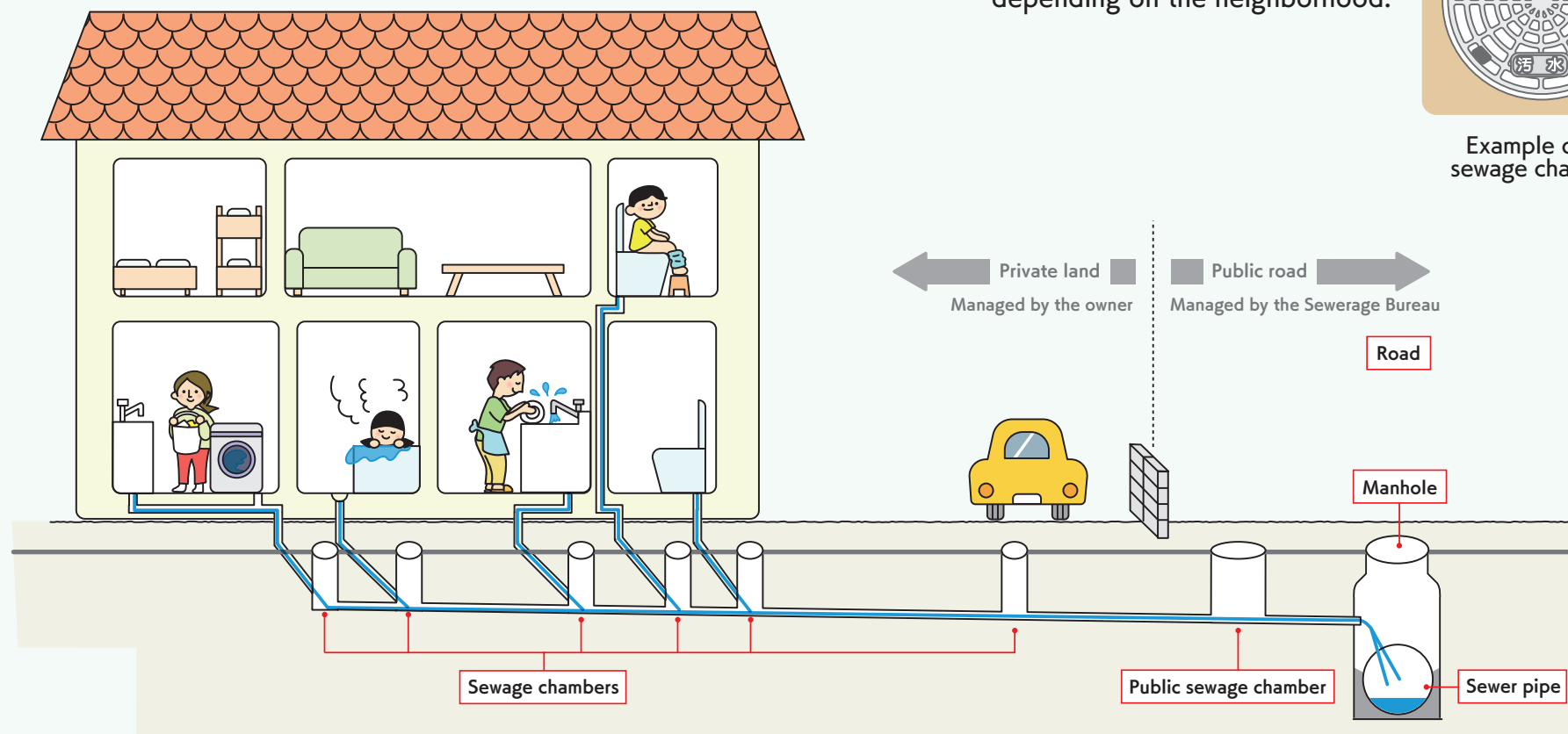
Emergency Toilet Measures for Houses

In the event of a disaster, it is essential to have a toilet prepared for sheltering at home (sheltering in place). Familiarize yourself with the mechanism of the sewerage system when considering emergency toilet procedures.

Additionally, check the locations of sewage chambers and the public chamber, and the route by which drainage from your toilets travels from your house to the sewers. Confirm the location of the public chamber, as this may vary depending on the neighborhood.



Example of a sewage chamber



*This is a depiction of one example of a sewerage system for a house, but there are a variety of systems.

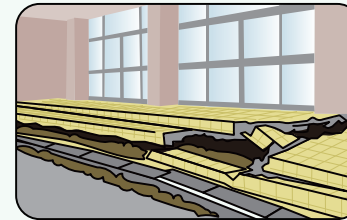
2. Emergency Inspection Steps

After attaching a portable toilet, perform a visual inspection for any significant damage to the plumbing system. If there are no problems, proceed to "3. Functional Inspection Steps." If there are problems, continue using the portable toilet. (Refer to the illustrations on the righthand page for item nos. 4-8.)

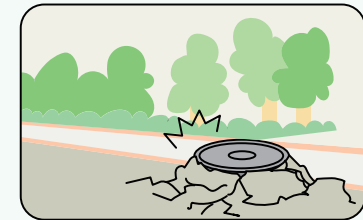
No.	Example Checklist	☒
1	Is there a power outage?	☐
2	Are the faucets (taps, etc.) working?	☐
3	Is the toilet bowl damaged?	☐
4	Is the ground swollen or sinking?	☐
5	Are manholes rising due to liquefaction, etc.?	☐
6	Are the sewage chambers damaged?	☐
7	Is the point where the sewerage system connects to the building damaged?	☐
8	If you have a septic tank, is it damaged?	☐

Points of Inspection

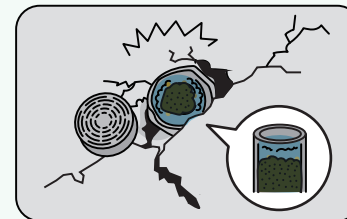
It is necessary to know the normal conditions of the locations and appearances of the inspection points. If anything looks different from normal, the inspection point may be damaged.



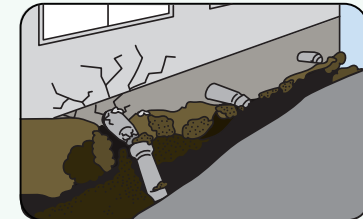
4 Is the ground swollen or sinking?



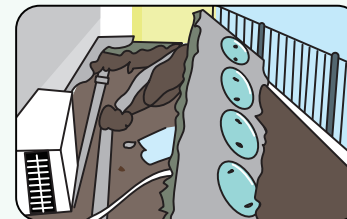
5 Are manholes rising due to liquefaction, etc.?



6 Are the sewage chambers damaged?



7 Is the point where the sewerage system connects to the building damaged?



- ☐ Check 1. Electrical leakage (indoors)
- ☐ Check 2. Septic tank blower
- ☐ Check 3. Sewage leaks from the inlet pipe or septic tank itself
- ☐ Check 4. Abnormalities in the disinfection chamber

8 If you have a septic tank, is it damaged?

From the "Manual on Measures Against Septic Tank Damage in the Event of a Disaster: Resident Checklist"
Office for Promotion of Johkasou, Division for Promotion of Proper Waste Disposal, Environmental Regeneration and Material Cycles Bureau, the Ministry of the Environment, April 2021

3. Functional Inspection Steps

You may not know there is damage to the sewerage system until you try to flush. If running water is shut off but you can still obtain water, you can remove the portable toilet and begin flushing using a bucket to catch any signs of trouble and minimize damage. If there are any problems, stop bucket flushing and use the portable toilet.

1) Performing a bucket flush

Flush the toilet bowl using a bucket. The amount of water needed will vary depending on the type of toilet bowl. You can flush with about 3-6 liters of water if you pour the water carefully. Toilet paper can clog the pipes, so please dispose of it as burnable garbage.

Tips for bucket flushing

Using a bucket is recommended, as other containers like a plastic bottle cannot flush enough water at once. Pour the water quickly to push solid waste and urine to the back of the toilet bowl. The trick is to pour the water so it hits any solid waste directly.

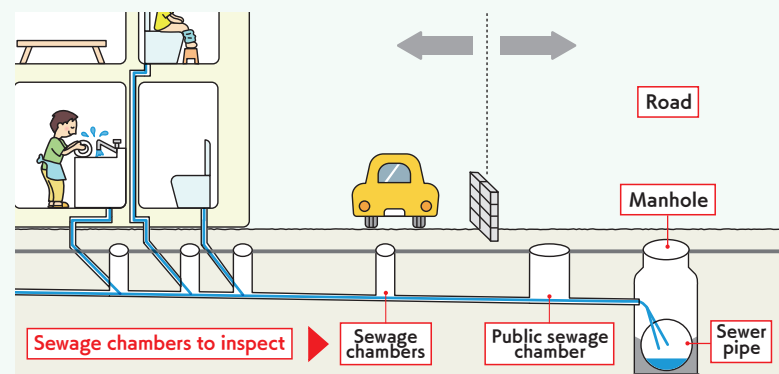


2) Catching signs of trouble

Inspecting the sewage chambers

Check the sewerage flow in the final sewage chamber on the property, which is located just before the public chamber. If sewage is not flowing or is backing up, you can assume that there is damage along the line before the final sewage chamber. Stop bucket flushing and use a portable toilet.

If you have a septic tank, check the tank's inlet chamber.

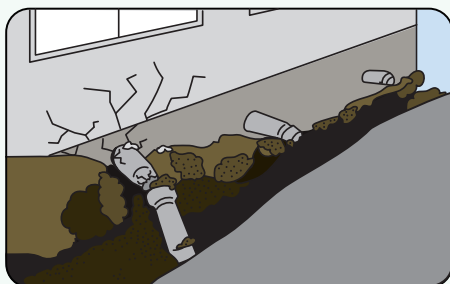


One way to check the sewerage flow is to insert wadded toilet paper and wait a bit to see if it is flushed. If the toilet paper is still there, you can assume there is a problem with the sewerage system.

Other inspections (functional inspection steps)

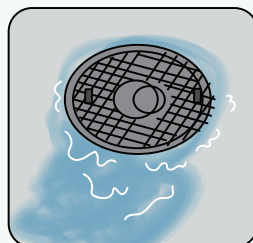
The point where the sewerage system connects to the building

Check for damage and leaks if you can do so visually.



Sewage chamber covers

Check if sewage or other matter is overflowing from the sewage chambers.



Overhead and exposed pipes

Seepage or other signs will appear if there is any damage to pipes in the ceiling, etc. If there are any exposed pipes, check them visually for damage and leaks.



4. Steps for Provisional Use

Even if the sewerage system is damaged, you may be able to perform "3. Functional Inspection Steps" without issues, and some problem may arise after continued bucket flushing.

In "4. Steps for Provisional Use," continue bucket flushing in the same way as described in "3. Functional Inspection Steps." If there is any problem, stop using your toilet and use a portable toilet instead.

5. Steps to Confirm Resumed Use

The plumbing system may be damaged even if power and water are restored.

Determine in advance the procedure to follow when power and water are restored, and which specialist you will contact. Repairs vary depending on the damage, so consider consulting a specialist as needed, having a disaster damage survey done, and ordering repairs.

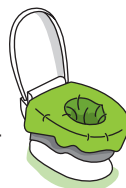


OR

Checklist: Toilet Preparations in the Event of a Disaster

☐ Portable toilet

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} \boxed{} & \times & \boxed{} & \times & \boxed{} & = & \boxed{} \\ \text{Number of people} & & \text{Number of} & & \text{Number of days} & & \text{Uses needed} \\ \text{in your family} & & \text{toilet uses} & & \text{prepared for} & & \text{uses to} \\ & & & & & & \text{stockpile for} \end{array}$$



*The guideline is to stockpile for 5 uses per person per day.
*Stockpile a minimum of 3 days' worth of supplies, or 1 week's worth if possible.

☐ Toilet paper

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry's recommended guideline is to prepare 1 month's supply (4 rolls/person). Try to calculate what you actually need.



☐ Light

Prepare a light that will leave your hands free and that can illuminate the whole space.



☐ Hand sanitizer

Prepare alcohol disinfectant, wet wipes, etc., to maintain hand sanitation even if the water is shut off.



☐ Plastic bags

Prepare a plastic bag to prevent the portable toilet from getting wet when attached to the toilet bowl.



☐ Lidded containers

Prepare lidded containers to prevent odor from escaping.



☐ Other items

Consider whether any other items are needed to use the toilet safely and comfortably.

Labo. Editorial supervision by Japan Toilet Labo.
日本トイレ研究所

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