

DATA SHEET – OSHA SANITATION RULES: THE STRAIGHT POOP

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April 22, 2009 (revised:_)

THE USA 829 CONTRACT with Producers says in *Article 15 Health, Safety, Sanitary Conditions, Insurance, and Lockers* that they “shall provide a safe and sanitary place for the clothing of the employees and sanitary lavatory facilities at all shops, studios and locations.” But exactly what does this mean? How many facilities should be available? Of what type?

OSHA DEFINITIONS. One place to look for minimum requirements is in the OSHA sanitation rules at 29 CFR 1910.141. First, they define their terms:

"Toilet facility," means a fixture maintained within a toilet room for the purpose of defecation or urination, or both.

"Toilet room," means a room maintained within or on the premises of any place of employment, containing toilet facilities for use by employees.

"Water closet" means a toilet facility maintained within a toilet room for the purpose of both defecation and urination and which is flushed with water.

SEPARATE BUT EQUAL. In 1910.141(c) OSHA specifies that “toilet facilities, in toilet rooms separate for each sex, shall be provided in all places of employment.” Separate toilet rooms are not needed for each sex if the “toilet rooms will be occupied by no more than one person at a time, can be locked from the inside, and contain at least one water closet.”

HOW MANY FACILITIES? OSHA says the number of facilities “provided for each sex shall be based on the number of employees of that sex for whom the facilities are furnished.” Table J-1 provides the minimum numbers of required facilities per employee of each sex. So for example if there are 15 employees, all men, only one water closet is needed. If one or more women are hired (e.g., 5 women and 10 men), two water closets are needed.

But Table J-1 only applies to permanent places of employment. During the time set construction is in progress, a location may come under the OSHA Construction Standards at 1926.51. This rule does not even mention women. Their Table D-1 shows an alarming number of workers have access to a single facility: The two standards are compared below:

OSHA General Industry Standard		OSHA Construction Standard	
TABLE J-1 • 1910.141(c)(1)(i)		TABLE D-1 • 1926.51(c)(1)	
# of employees	Minimum # water closets*	# of employees	Minimum # water closets
1 to 15	1	20 or less	1
16 to 35	2	20 or more	1 toilet seat & 1 urinal
36 to 55	3	per 40 workers	
56 to 80	4	200 or more	1 toilet seat & 1 urinal
81 to 110	5	per 50 workers	
111 to 150	6		
Over 150	(**)		

Footnote (*) Where toilet facilities will not be used by women, urinals may be provided instead of water closets, except that the number of water closets in such cases shall not be reduced to less than 2/3 of the minimum specified.

Footnote (**) 1 additional fixture for each additional 40 employees.

CREWS ON THE MOVE. Mobile crews also have sanitation rights under the General Industry Standard. Its section 1910.141(c)(1)(ii) says that Table J-1 does “not apply to mobile crews or to normally unattended work locations so long as employees working at these locations have transportation immediately available to nearby toilet facilities which meet the other requirements.....” So we should have access, one way or another, to these facilities.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS. Below are other requirements that you can expect each employer to provide:

- 1910.141(c)(2)(i) Each water closet shall occupy a separate compartment with a door and walls or partitions between fixtures sufficiently high to assure privacy.
- 1910.141(d)(1) Washing facilities shall be maintained in a sanitary condition.
- 1910.141(d)(2)(ii) Each lavatory shall be provided with hot and cold running water, or tepid running water.
- 1910.141(d)(2)(iii) Hand soap or similar cleansing agents shall be provided.
- 1910.141(d)(2)(iv) Individual hand towels or sections thereof, of cloth or paper, warm air blowers or clean individual sections of continuous cloth toweling, convenient to the lavatories, shall be provided.
- 1910.141(d)(3)(I) Whenever showers are required by a particular standard, the showers shall be provided in accordance with paragraphs (d)(3)(ii) through (v) of this section.

- 1910.141(d)(3)(ii) One shower shall be provided for each 10 employees of each sex, or numerical fraction thereof, who are required to shower during the same shift.
- 1910.141(d)(3)(iii) Body soap or other appropriate cleansing agents convenient to the showers shall be provided as specified in paragraph (d)(2)(iii) of this section.
- 1910.141(d)(3)(iv) Showers shall be provided with hot and cold water feeding a common discharge line.
- 1910.141(d)(3)(v) Employees who use showers shall be provided with individual clean towels.
- 1910.141(e) *Change rooms.* Whenever employees are required by a particular standard to wear protective clothing because of the possibility of contamination with toxic materials, change rooms equipped with storage facilities for street clothes and separate storage facilities for the protective clothing shall be provided.
- 1910.141(g)(2) *Eating and drinking areas.* No employee shall be allowed to consume food or beverages in a toilet room nor in any area exposed to a toxic material.
- 1910.141(g)(4) *Sanitary storage.* No food or beverages shall be stored in toilet rooms or in an area exposed to a toxic material.

EATING REQUIREMENTS. These last two requirements mean you also need a safe and sanitary location to eat food at each worksite. The next time someone wants you to eat where wood dust is falling or where solvent vapors float, remind them that OSHA compares such locations to a toilet in terms of suitability as a lunch room.