



# County of San Diego

Department of Environmental Health

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## SEWAGE DISPOSAL IN AN EMERGENCY

### WHAT WILL HAPPEN?

In a large magnitude earthquake, sewer lines will probably be damaged and become inoperable. Sewage may back up and broken water lines may become contaminated by sewage.

### WHAT SHOULD I DO?

If a sewer line blockage is suspected or obvious, discontinue discharge of wastewater in house or building drains and do not flush toilets. Avoid contact with any overflowing wastewater or sewage. Divert wastewater or sewage by ditch, sandbags, or temporary pipeline into a functioning sewer line manhole, or contain by sandbags or berm. Avoid diverting wastewater or sewage into areas of habitation or domestic water supplies.

### WHAT CAN I USE?

1. Portable camp toilets, R-V toilets, porta-potties, etc.
2. Large extra-strength trash bags (double bagged) may be placed in watertight plastic or metal containers with tight fitting lids, or used as liners in toilets. Household disinfectant can be used for odor control. Final disposal can be by burying or sanitary sewer when notified by public officials.
3. A dug latrine or trench, 2-3 feet deep, can be used to bury human waste. Spread a thin layer of powdered lime and a layer of earth each time it is used.

