

Using the Bathroom in the Field

Gather information: Each field experience will have different sanitation resources available, so be sure to ask your supervisor/colleague what to expect.

- Will there be running water and flushing toilets?
- Will there be an outhouse?
- How long will you be away from facilities?
- Will there be stocked toilet paper and/or period supplies?

Plan ahead: Even if you're just going out for the day, it is best to have all equipment needed for any bathroom situation.

- Hand sanitizer
- Toilet paper
- [Latrine trowel](#) (small shovel to dig a hole)
- Sealable plastic bag
- 'Go kit' and/or period products
- Pee funnel (aka "portable urinal")



Examples of bathroom materials (top left), a period "go kit" (top right), and a pee funnel (bottom).

Privacy, or lack thereof: The landscape will influence the amount of privacy that you have. Working in a grassland or a desert might offer less privacy than a forest. No matter your bathroom situation, it is advisable to follow these rules.

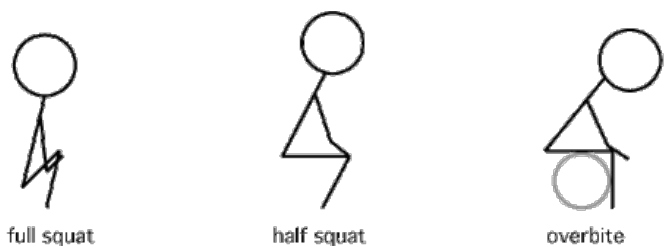
- Go at least 200 feet (about 70 steps) away from any body of water, campsite, or trail.
 - Exception: near large bodies of water in arid regions, pee directly into the water to prevent beaches from smelling like urine
- Leave no trace - pack out any items you use.
 - In some heavy-use areas, you may need to pack out solid waste. In these cases, there are options: bucket, wag bag, etc.
- Watch out for wildlife, mosquitoes, and ticks and try to pick a spot that won't expose you to animal confrontation or pests.
 - Watch for wildlife cameras!
- Respect others' privacy - if you observe a group member walking towards a private area, don't follow them. Give them space and warn anyone who is unknowingly approaching.
- To request a need for privacy to your group, you can loudly announce, "I'm going to. . .
 - ...pay a visit to nature."
 - ...water the flowers."
 - ...find a pee spot."
 - ...visit the facilities."
 - ...find a squat spot."
- If there is an outhouse available, use it. It's there to concentrate the waste.

Peeing in the field

- Find a soft spot that will absorb quickly and not splash on you.
- Check the slope and ensure that dangling items like pants, shoelaces, or straps are uphill.
- Do not pee directly into small ponds and streams, but do pee directly into large rivers or lakes as it can help prevent land areas from becoming oversaturated.
- If in an alpine area, pee on rocks as animals can dig up and damage fragile vegetation looking for salts in urine.
- Many people find that it's easier to pee standing up in the field. There are several companies that sell portable pee funnels.

Pooping in the field

- Find a spot with loose soil for easy digging and ample sunlight to help decomposition.
- Dig a hole at least 6 inches deep and about 8 inches across.
- Get in position - choose from one of these poses or make up your own, just be comfortable!
- Make your deposit.
- Wipe away using as few materials as possible. Some folks prefer baby wipes rather than toilet paper, just be sure to pack out whichever wiping materials you choose.
- Fill in your hole completely with soil and cover the top with leaves or rocks so that it matches the surrounding landscape.



- Wash or sanitize your hands.

Menstruating in the field

- Know your options - your main choices will be tampons/pads/liners vs. a menstrual cup, or pack/wear period underwear but choose whatever product is best for you.
- Have both a clean and waste bag.
 - *Clean bag* - unused products in a zip-top bag, sanitizing wipes, hand sanitizer, pain killers, biodegradable soap, and some folx like a few nitrile medical gloves if using a menstrual cup.
 - Tip: you can also just rinse out your menstrual cup with your water bottle.
 - *Waste bag* – For used pads, tampons, etc., have a zip-top bag lined with aluminum foil or covered in duct tape for privacy
- Wash your hands with soap and water at camp and use hand sanitizer on the trail.
- You can bring pre-moistened wipes to clean your hands before and after inserting or removing the menstrual cup or tampons.

Tampons/pads/liners		Menstrual cup		Period Underwear	
Pros	Cons	Pros	Cons	Pros	Cons
- Can use tampons w/o applicators to save space - You know the routine and it works for you	- You have to carry them in and out - Require a clean and waste bag	- Reusable and lightweight - No bleach or dioxins found in some tampons	- Inserting and removing takes practice - Lack of soap and clean water can be a deterrent	- Zero waste - Don't require soap or clean water if you bring multiple pairs	- Don't wick away moisture as well as pads - Take up more space to pack out