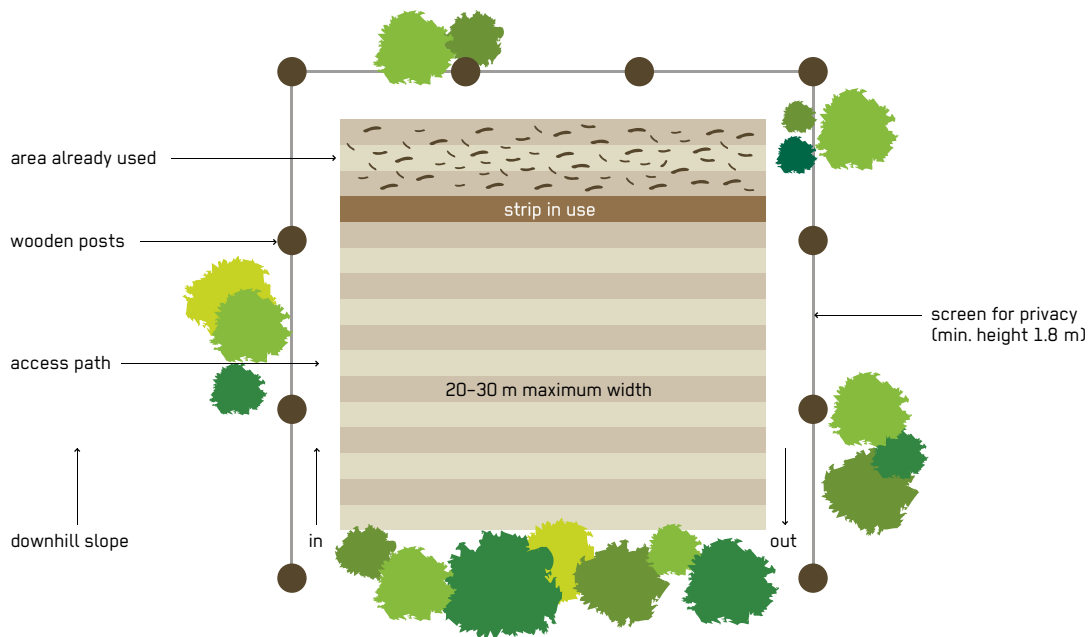


Controlled Open Defecation

Phase of Emergency	Application Level / Scale	Management Level	Objectives / Key Features
★ Acute Response ★ Stabilisation ★ Recovery	Household ★★ Neighbourhood ★ City	Household Shared ★★ Public	Minimising immediate public health risk, Prevention of random open defecation, Fast implementation
Space Required	Technical Complexity	Inputs	Outputs
★★★ High	★ Low	● Faeces, ● Urine (+ ● Dry Cleansing Materials) (+ ● Anal Cleansing Water)	● Excreta



Controlled Open Defecation is an intervention that may be considered in the acute response phase where random open defecation is prevalent and no other sanitation infrastructure has been set up. It includes the provision of designated defecation sites (commonly called Open Defecation Fields) and the clearing of scattered faeces.

Controlled Open Defecation restricts and manages open defecation practises to certain pre-determined areas (defecation fields) and thereby addresses the public health risks associated with uncontrolled open defecation. In addition, areas where open defecation poses a particular public health threat (e.g. close to markets, water sources, hospitals or schools) should be very clearly marked, and open defecation in these areas be strictly controlled.

Design Considerations: Defecation fields require a large area of land. The area chosen should be at least 50 m from food production, storage and preparation areas (e.g. kitchens, markets), water sources, water storage and treatment facilities but close enough to ensure safety of and accessibility for users. Defecation fields should be downhill of settlements, camps and water sources to avoid contamination. The area should have proper screening for privacy, segregated sites for men and women and handwashing facilities at the entrance/exit areas. Proper lighting is recommended (including for access paths) in order to improve security at night. The defecation area consists of defecation strips, separated by screening. People should be encouraged to use one strip of land at a time and used areas must be clearly marked. Internal partitions can be used to provide more privacy and encourage greater use. After a strip is filled it is closed and faeces should be treated with lime and removed to a safe disposal site. There should be an attendant at all times,

ensuring proper use and security. To improve open defecation fields, shallow trenches (U.6) can be dug in order to promote the covering of faeces after defecation.

Materials: Materials are needed for proper screening and demarcation of the area. This can be done with plastic canvas or materials such as bamboo or fabrics. Wooden or metal posts are required as well as shovels and picks to set up the posts. Staff need to be provided with personal protective equipment (e.g. clothing, masks, gloves, boots), shovels, bags, buckets, wheelbarrows to remove and transport scattered faeces. Lime should be provided for subsequent treatment of faeces.

Applicability: Controlled Open Defecation is not considered an improved sanitation technology and should be used only as an extreme short-term measure before other sanitation options are ready to use. Wherever possible Controlled Open Defecation should be avoided and Shallow Trench Latrines (U.6) or if possible more improved sanitation solutions should be considered as a first option instead.

Operation and Maintenance: Routine operation and maintenance (O&M) tasks include the provision of water, soap and anal cleansing materials (either water or dry cleansing materials). An attendant should be on site at all times. In order to ensure security, continuous user orientation, proper use and the opening and closing of defecation strips. O&M also includes regular treatment of faeces with lime, their removal and burial or transport to a disposal site. If random open defecation is still prevalent in the area O&M may also include clearing of scattered faeces in the area.

Health and Safety: Although an improvement compared to indiscriminate open defecation, Controlled Open Defecation still remains a public health risk and should be avoided wherever possible. Involved staff must be provided with adequate personal protective equipment. Defecation fields have to be equipped with Handwashing Facilities (U.7). Solid waste containers (X.8) at the entrance/exit can further promote public health and can be an important measure for menstrual hygiene management.

Proper handwashing with soap after toilet use needs to be addressed as part of hygiene promotion activities (X.12). Additional illumination at night, security guards for protection and accessibility for all users is required.

Costs: The technology itself does not require high investment costs. The materials needed can usually be obtained cheaply and locally. For the operation of the technology, full-time staff members are required to ensure the correct use of the fields. Staff can be volunteer members of the local community. No technical knowledge is needed. Major costs associated with Controlled Open Defecation could arise from renting or acquiring the required land.

Social Considerations: A defecation field should be located where it is less likely to be a public health hazard, where costs for acquiring land are relatively low, and where it is accessible enough for people to use it. Gender segregation of facilities is critical. Having separate entrances and exits, not entirely exposed to the public, can help improve privacy. Full time attendants can promote privacy, security and correct use of the facility. Attendants can also train parents on how children should use the facility. In addition, intensive awareness raising and hygiene promotion measures are needed to ensure that defecation fields are used and random open defecation is avoided.

Strengths and Weaknesses:

- ⊕ Can be built and repaired with locally available materials
- ⊕ Low (but variable) capital costs depending on land availability
- ⊕ Rapid implementation
- ⊕ Minimises indiscriminate open defecation
- ⊖ Big land area required and costs to rehabilitate land may be significant
- ⊖ Lack of privacy
- ⊖ Difficult to manage

→ **References and further reading material for this technology can be found on page 190**