

Key Actions for Gender-Based Violence and WASH

Note: This is an excerpt from the IASC GBV Handbook.

The following actions apply to the WASH cluster (organizations implementing water, sanitation and hygiene programmes. The cluster identifies a focal point who participates regularly in the gender-based violence (GBV) working group and reports on the cluster's achievement of the key actions.

- 1. Identify safety and security risks for women and girls that are relevant to water and sanitation systems to ensure the location, design, and maintenance programmes maximise safety and security of women and girls.**
 - Participate in the coordinated situational analysis to gather relevant information about the community and situation related to sexual violence.
 - Special attention should be paid to the needs of vulnerable groups of women and girls, such as single female-headed households, adolescents, and unaccompanied girl children.
- 2. Mobilize women and men to participate in the location, design and maintenance of water and sanitation facilities.**
 - Both men and women should be mobilized equally.
 - Ensure all users, and particularly women and girls, participate in identifying risky hygiene practices and conditions, and that all users share responsibility to measurably reduce these risks.
 - Ensure that women comprise 50 percent of water and/or sanitation committees.
- 3. Locate water points in areas that are accessible and safe for all, with special attention to the needs of women and children.**
 - Discuss the location of the pumps with all members of the community.
 - As a guide, no household should be more than 500 metres from a water point.
- 4. Design or adapt hand pumps and water carrying containers for use by women and children.**
- 5. In situations where water is rationed or pumped at given times, plan this in consultation with all users, but especially with women.**
 - Times should be set which are convenient and safe for women and others who have responsibility for collecting water.
 - All users should be fully informed of when and where water is available.
- 6. Design communal bathing and washing facilities in consultation with women and girls to ensure that users have privacy and maintain dignity.**
 - Determine numbers, location, design, safety, appropriateness and convenience of facilities in consultation with the users, particularly women and adolescent girls (including whether facilities for males and females should be near each other or further apart).
 - Facilities should be central, accessible and well-lit in order to contribute to the safety of users.
 - Bathing facilities should have doors with locks on the inside.
- 7. Design latrines in consultation with women and girls to maximise safety, privacy and dignity.**
 - Consider preferences and cultural habits in determining the type of latrines to be constructed.
 - Use sex-disaggregated data to plan the ratio of women's cubicles to men's. A rough guide is 3:1.

- Install latrines with doors that lock from the inside.
- Location of latrines should ensure that women and girls feel – and are – safe using them.
- Communal latrines should be provided with lighting, or families provided with torches.

8. Distribute suitable materials for the absorption and disposal of menstrual blood for women and girls who menstruate. Provide individual sanitary packs for all women and girls from at least 13 to 49 years.

- Estimate the number of menstruating women and girls at 25 percent of the total population.
- Consult with women and girls to identify materials most culturally appropriate.
- In some situations, the first distribution of sanitary materials will need to occur without community consultations in order to avoid delay. If this happens, the following can be used as a guide in preparing the first sanitary packs, with changes made later after consultations with women and girls. A basic sanitary pack for one person for six months: (a) two square meters absorbent cotton per six months OR 12 disposable sanitary towels per month (b) three underpants (c) 250 grams of soap per month (in addition to any other soap distribution) (d) one bucket (can last for one year)
- Distribute sanitary packs at regular intervals throughout the emergency and distribute to any new arrivals.
- Actively seek participation from relevant groups in the distribution of sanitary packs. Consult with and facilitate the participation of women and girls and seek input and participation from community-based health providers (e.g., health promoters, animators)

9. Inform women and men about the maintenance and use of water and sanitation facilities.

- Women and men should be fully informed of how to repair facilities, and how to make and/or where to find spare parts.
- Determine timings of information sessions in consultation with the intended users, particularly women, so as not to conflict with their other responsibilities.
- Use/adapt information and promotional materials to ensure they are culturally acceptable and accessible to all groups (e.g. women, illiterate members of the population).
- Use participatory materials and methods that allow all groups to plan and monitor their own hygiene improvements. As a rough guide, in a camp scenario there should be two hygiene promoters/community mobilizers, one female and one male, per 1,000 members of the population.

10. Maintain awareness of involvement of women and men in hygiene promotional activities and ensure continuous sex balance on committees and among hygiene promoters.

- Ensure that women are not overburdened with the responsibility for hygiene promotional activities or management of water and sanitation facilities.
- Ensure that women and men have equitable influence in hygiene promotional activities and that any benefits or incentives are distributed equally among women and men.