



7. Disability considerations

This section on disability considerations is added here keeping in mind the importance of social inclusion and humanitarian approach to any sanitation related programme. Bhutan Building Rules 2002 Section 8 clearly states that all buildings should be accessible to those with disabilities and particularly refers to latrines. Although rural household latrines are not subject to the Building Rules, Royal Government of Bhutan has clear responsibilities in supporting the inclusion of disabled people. However, the technical details of disability considerations are beyond the scope of this handbook and are not included herein.

For whom?

- People who are not fully mobile or may have difficulty walking or squatting.
- Other people who may have trouble using the latrine include small children or the elderly, those with poor eyesight, sick people, pregnant women or the disabled.

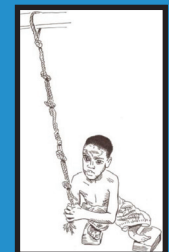
What can we do?

Make the toilet easy to access and use by making SIMPLE changes in terms of:

- Reaching the latrine
- Using the latrine

Handrails

- Handrails can be placed along the path to make the toilet easy and safe to reach, especially when it is dark or when the path is wet.
- Handrails inside the latrine can also help people who cannot see well find the pan without having to use their hands or falling in.
- Handrails inside the latrine on any of the walls can help a person balance when squatting or getting up, but they must be close enough and at the right level that they can be reached when sitting.
- Handrails on the inside or outside of the door are easier to grip than a small door handle and makes it easier to shut the door from inside.
- Handrails can be made of any material, but should be easy to clean.
- An alternative to a handrail is to provide a knotted rope tied to the ceiling which they can use to balance themselves and get up when they have finished.





Raised seats

Raised seat is helpful for people who have trouble squatting or keeping their balance. It also helps people with stiff legs, people who cannot bend them as well as the elderly, someone who is injured, have missing limbs or people with weak legs as a result of an accident or illness such as polio. If a person has difficulty supporting themselves when seated, the stool should have a back to it and arm rests, more like a chair.

A permanent stool can be made of stones, brick or concrete. If it has a lip around the top edge, this will help excreta to fall straight into the pan.

If the stool is made of cement or concrete this may be difficult to clean compared with ceramic tile. If possible paint the concrete to stop it absorbing water and urine and making it easier to clean.

A removable stool can be a wooden chair or stool, or a plastic or metal stool with a hole cut in it or it can be a purpose made stool of two planks slightly apart making the gap.

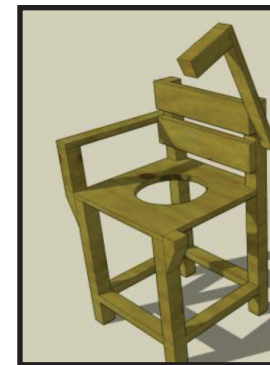
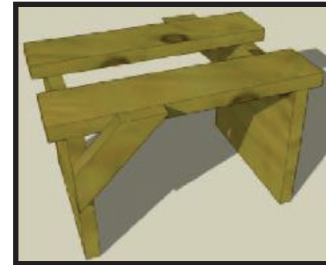
Removable stools need to be light so that the user can move them into place, but also stable so they do not slip or slide when sat on.

If the stool is made from a single wooden plank you can cut a slot at the front which allows a person to wash themselves after defecating without having to get up.

Alternatively a plastic toilet seat can be fixed on wooden legs which will be easier to clean, but the hole may be too big for a child or someone who is skinny.

If the person is not too heavy, you can cut a hole in the bottom of an upturned bucket which can be sat on.

The legs of the stool should be wide enough so it clearly fits over the pan. To make it more stable the legs should be connected together to stop them spreading when sat on. A wooden removable stool should be painted or varnished if possible to make it easier to clean.





Entrance and door adjustments

For people who are not very mobile, it can sometimes be difficult to get through a narrow door or close the door once they are inside. Doorways should be at least 100cm wide if catering for wheelchairs or people using crutches or other supports.

The recommended spiral or 'G' shaped toilet arrangement does not require a solid door which makes it easy for people who cannot grip well or are not strong enough to close a heavy door. Spiral shaped latrines also do not require the user to turn around to use the latrine. They can just walk in as long as you remember to turn the pan around.

If privacy is required a light cloth or plastic sheet door hanging can be installed which can be used by children and the elderly alike.

If a solid door is preferred strips of car tyre can be used to make the door hinge which act as a spring to shut the door after it has been opened. This is useful as it means you don't need to touch the door after you've finished using the latrine.

If none of these is suitable, a rope attached to the corner of the door and run through some loops in the wall or roof can allow the door to be pulled shut from inside.

Anal cleansing materials

For people who are not mobile, it is important that their anal cleansing materials are readily available inside the cubicle. This is also true for people who are sick, particularly with diarrhoea or other stomach problems. Water, paper, sticks or leaves should be stored permanently inside the toilet and refilled each day. This can be done at the same time as the hand washing water is filled up.

Larger cubicle

To allow for handrails, permanent or removable stools and space for people to turn or clean themselves, it is likely that the cubicle will need to be a little bigger than for an able bodied person. If the person needs the help of someone else you need to make the latrine bigger to accommodate both of them.

For people who have difficulty bending their legs, you may also need to make the cubicle bigger so that the door can still be closed if they sit with their legs straight. Older people, small children or someone using crutches or a stick may not like to straddle the pan when turning around as they are afraid to fall in or slip.

Having the latrine in the corner rather than the middle of the latrine may help them. They can turn around away from the pan and as it is in the corner the person can use the walls for balance.

Simple adaptations for Children

- Guide rope or handrail to the latrine enables children to go by themselves
- Handrails inside the latrine will give children something to hold onto
- A raised stool with a smaller hole can be used by children to place over the pan. The legs of the stool should be wide enough to clearly span the hole. If they are afraid about falling in this can help a lot.
- Locate toilet closer



Access to the latrine

- For older people or anyone who has trouble walking, it is important that they feel safe getting to the latrine. Walkways and ramps must not be too steep. If a ramp is provided for wheelchair users it should be wide enough and there should be a flat section outside the door so people can stop and open the door and also at the bottom of the ramp.
- Ramps can be made of wood if the earth is likely to get muddy or unstable, but they should be well secured to prevent them tipping over or falling off their supports. A footpath will also help them find it, made of stones or gravel and stops the path getting muddy.
- The door should open outwards unless space is provided inside to enable the door to be shut.
- If a ramp is not possible and steps are needed, try and make sure all the steps are the same height. Provide a handrail as well to help people use the steps.
- Where a person is totally unable to go outside and space allows, we can use the traditional Bhutanese long drop. This places the latrine inside the house on the upper level.
- The floorboards around the pan must be well fitted and varnished if possible to stop the wood from rotting. A cement plaster can be applied around the squatting pan to enable the floor to be kept clean. Water for cleansing and hand washing must be maintained in the house.

