**Answers to Questions in November 2023 Provident Paper**

1. The sewer is dysfunctional. One of your neighbors builds an outhouse by your side fence. The other one figured a “near bush” is fine for a temporary solution. A third one has a chemical toilet they use until it is full and still the problem goes on, so they dig a trench and dump the contents in along your back fence. How can these things affect you? What precautions should you take?

Answer: All of these situations are hazardous. Flies and animals can transfer the bacteria from them to your yard. Contaminates can leach into the soil as well. You should be very vigilant about hand washing, wearing closed shoes and socks anywhere near the perimeter of your yard, and keep food safely covered. If you have a small yard, it may be a good idea to garden in containers with soil that is safe from contamination if you choose to grow food.

2. There is no garbage pick-up. One morning you wake up and find 5 garbage bags full of Styrofoam plates, plastic utensils, containers, and food waste as well as bottles, cans, and dirty plastic bags in front of your house. How should you deal with this?

Answer: Unfortunately a crisis brings out the best and the worst in people. It is not uncommon for people to dump garbage and waste in another location with little regard for the people it will affect. It is illegal, and you can notify the police. However, you should also have personal protective equipment that you can wear to clean it up the best you can. If it is human waste related it is good to have something like cat litter that will help soak it up. Teach your children to stay clear of filth and to be considerate of others. Burn, smash, reduce or find ways to take care of garbage as much as possible. If you are keeping your own at a minimum that means that you may be better able to deal with this and hope it is not repeated.

3. Your family used to shower or bathe every day and wear clean clothes. However, there isn’t water for that now, and you are out of soap and shampoo. Your kids start to develop BO, skin soars, and even scabies or lice. What could you have done to prevent this? They are miserable and complaining. Can’t you just send them to play with friends? After all isn’t everyone “in the same boat”?

Answer: Personal hygiene is very important even in times when there is little water. Some emergency agencies tell you to have 1 gallon of water per person per day, but many experts recommend closer to 3 gallons per person per day. Basically, have as much as you can store so that you have some for cooking and cleaning. Cleaning includes personal hygiene. It helps even to wipe your body with a damp wet wipe every day and have a sponge bath every 3 days. It is not a bad idea to learn how to handle and treat problems like this and have the supplies. Store soap!

If your child or you are infected with a skin or hair problem/condition that may be contagious this is not a good time to visit other people and infect them. Get the problem cleared up and be considerate about not spreading it to others.

4. There is no running water. What are some of the problems you face if your only source is the creek?

Answer: Contamination from any outside source is always a concern. If you get sick in a crisis it could cost you your life as it did many of the pioneers. Often a water filter is not enough. There may also not be water in the source you are counting on requiring water procurement and purification to take a great deal of your time and energy that may be valuable for other things. The best answer it to take time to store and maintain a water supply.

5. Night and day you can smell burning garbage. You know it is not wood, but plastics and other toxic things. You worry about fires, but now you are starting to be affected by the pollutants in the air and you are starting to have problems with your breathing. What should you do if this happens? What should you prepare in case of this?

Answer: People will burn things in an emergency. The best thing you can do is to burn responsibly. Avoid burning plastics and foams or being near things that are toxic that are burning. As you plan ahead, consider how you can handle something like a crisis without disposable things that may need to be burned.

It is also not a bad idea to have respirator masks for your family in case it is very bad. They can keep you from developing lung and respiratory problems or chemical sensitivities if the pollutants become very bad.

6. Your neighbor seems to have everything figured out. She has a makeshift potty and even a washing station with soap and water. Do you think it is fair for you to send your family over to that house to “take care of business”?

Answer: Would you like someone to expect you to take care of their waste? Prepare! Have the things you need ahead of time so that you can have the “proper potty alternative” and a hand washing station.

7. There is garbage everywhere. Some people have dumped food in their back yards. Some have piled garbage bags in the streets. You are starting to notice more flies, mice and even rats. What can you do?

Answer: Keep yourself and your own environment as clean as you can even in a crisis. Make sure you are not drawing vermin with food or safe places for them to harbor.

It is also a good idea to have a supply of pest strips, bait and traps for just such an emergency.

8. Sometimes porta-potties are set up every two miles in a disaster area. How can you make this work for you?

Answer: You can use the chamber pot method and carry a bucket to the port-a-potty or you can set up your own system. If you have a large enough yard that you can dig a hole and properly take care of waste 200 feet from dwellings (yours or neighbors) you can burry it. Otherwise you should have a temporary depository made with a garbage can. (

9. The power is gone out and probably won’t be on for two weeks or more. What can you do with all the food in your refrigerator and freezer? You didn’t take care of your food from the freezer in time. What should you do with it so that it doesn’t attract coyotes, cougars, and bears?

Answer: If you have a camp stove and the ability to properly can your freezer content quickly you can do that. You could hold a block party and share a feast with all your neighbors. If you don’t take care of the food in time to safely use it, you should burry it deeply so that you don’t attract wildlife.

10. How should you dispose of gray water properly? This is water used to wash hands, food, laundry, and housecleaning. What is black water, and how should it be disposed of?

Answer: Gray water can be poured out upon the soil. It is best if it has room to sink into the ground and dry out. You do have to be careful with detergents if a lot is present. However, sometimes this can cause muddy and sloppy ground. My favorite way to take care of gray water is to designate a place for this water, dig down to make a hole where you want to pour the water, and fill it with gravel. You may have seen an example of this at a camp ground.

Black water contains human waste. It is best disposed of this if you have separated liquid waste and solid waste have been kept separate. Liquid waste can be diluted and dispersed upon the ground. Solid waste should be mixed with dry biomass such as chopped leaves, dried grass, peat moss, cocoa choir, or chopped straw. This can be done by collecting this waste in a bucket and covering each deposit by the materials you choose. Cat litter can also be used for this, but will not enable composting as readily. Then this can be deposited in a hole, and covered with a board or other item. Things will sink as the moisture dissipates. When the hole is 1 to ½ foot from the ground level it should be covered with ash or lime and filled.

You can find more information on this topic at the following places:

* [www.beready.utah.gov](http://www.beready.utah.gov)
* [www.jimsway.com](http://www.jimsway.com)