

Privy and Vault Privy Guideline

Privies

A privy (also called an outhouse or pit toilet) is generally not considered to be a suitable method of disposing human waste. An improperly constructed or located privy can cause a health hazard because animals and insects can spread disease from the waste material back to humans. Nitrates from sewage can seep into well water contributing to methemoglobinemia (blue-baby syndrome) or into swimming water. Additionally, the waste matter can contribute to the polluting of our lakes and creeks with phosphorous and nitrogen causing eutrophication and algal blooms.

There is no regulation in BC describing how or where to construct a privy, therefore a Public Health Inspector will not issue a permit and will not inspect the privy construction.

If a privy causes a health hazard, the Public Health Inspector has authority under the Health Act and Sanitary Regulations to order it corrected.

A privy is less likely to cause a health hazard if these guidelines are followed.

When is a privy suitable?

- Privies are constructed where water under pressure is not available or practical.
- The water table must be at least 1.6 to 2.1 metres below the surface of the ground in silty or clay soils, or 4 to 4.5 metres below the surface in sandy soils, deeper in gravel.

Where should a privy be placed? A minimum of:

- 30m from a lake, creek, pond, river, etc.
- 30m from wells
- 3m from property boundary
- 10m from own house/cottage
- 15m from neighbour's house/cottage

Please note that a number of non vault privies are periodically pumped out by pumper trucks and therefore should be accessible to these trucks.

How should a privy be constructed?

- See attached plans.
- Excavate pit 1 to 1.5 metres deep. Crib sides to prevent sloughing.
Bottom of pit must be:
 - at least 60cm above water table in silty or clay soil.
 - at least 3m above water table in sandy soil, more in gravel.
- Place privy structure so pit is not accessible or visible from the exterior.
- Mound excavated earth so rain water and runoff don't enter the pit.
- Screen all openings in outhouse building and put self-closing device on the door to exclude insects.

- If water is hauled inside a cabin/building by bucket, then one sink can have a waste pipe that empties into the privy pit. Alternatively, wash water can be collected in a bucket and dumped into the privy. No other discharges should be connected to a privy.
- A construction template is available.

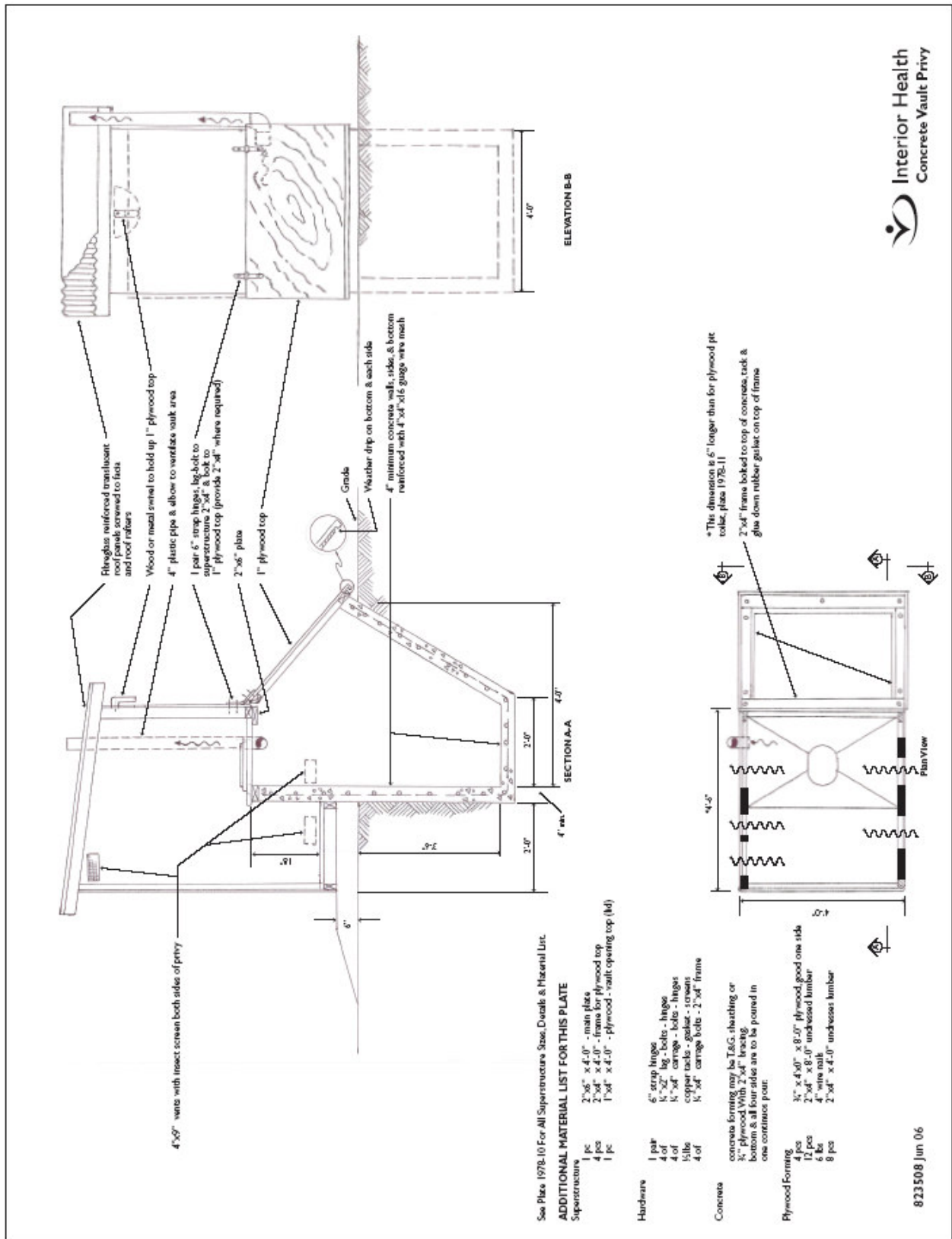
Vault Privies

If the above construction guidelines cannot be met due to water table or setback to water, consider constructing a vault privy. A vault privy must be accessible for approved septic pumping truck to empty periodically. The location should be at least:

- 15m from lake, stream, etc.
- 15m from wells
- 3m from property boundary
- 10m from own house/cottage
- 15m from neighbour's house/cottage
- the bottom of the vault should be above the highest seasonal water table

Please note: Two privy construction templates are attached. Larger and clearer versions are available.

If you have any questions please contact your nearest Public Health Inspection office.



See Plate 1978-10 For All Superstructure Sizes, Details & Material List.

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL LIST FOR THIS PLATE

- Superstructure
 1 pc 2'-36" x 4'-0" - main plate
 4 pcs 2'-36" x 4'-0" - frame for plywood top
 1 pc 1'-36" x 4'-0" - plywood - vault opening top (ld)

- Hardware
 1 pair 6" strap hinges
 4 of 1/2" lg. bolts - hinges
 4 of 1/2" carriage bolts - hinges
 1 title copper nuts - hinges - cover
 4 of 1/2" carriage bolts - 2'-36" frame

- Concrete
 concrete forming may be T&G sheathing or 3/4" plywood with 2'-36" bracing. bottom & all four sides are to be poured in one continuous pour.

- Plywood Forming
 1 pc 3/4" x 4'-0" x 8'-0" plywood, good one side
 4 pcs 2'-36" x 8'-0" undressed lumber
 4 of 4" x 4" x 4" undressed lumber
 8 pcs 2'-36" x 4'-0" undressed lumber

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SECTION A-A

SECTION B-B

SECTION C-C

PlanView (SECTION E-E)

SECTION D-D

MATERIAL LIST FOR ONE UNIT

Superstructure	4 pcs.	2"x4" x 4'-0"	- floor joists
	1 pc.	3/4" x 4'-0" x 4'-0"	- plywood - floor
	6 pcs.	3/4" x 4'-0" x 4'-0"	- vertical frame
	4 pcs.	3/4" x 4'-0" x 8'-0"	- plywood - sides
	3 pcs.	2"x4" x 6'-0"	- door
	3 pcs.	2"x4" x 2'-0"	- door
	2 pcs.	2"x4" x 3'-0"	- door bracing
	2 pcs.	1"x4" x 6'-0"	- door strip
	2 pcs.	1"x4" x 6'-0"	- door strip
	2 pcs.	1"x4" x 10'-0"	- railing strips
Roof	3 pcs.	2"x4" x 4'-0"	- rafters
	4 pcs.	1"x4" x 4'-0"	- fascia
	3 pcs.	Hfleglas reinforced translucent panels 26"x72"	- corrugated
Seat	1 pc.	3/4" x 4'-0" x 4'-0"	- plywood - top & front panel
			- closed front, colour - white
Pit Ventilation 1 stk.	1	4'-0" x 8'-0"	- "Arbortec" on 1/2" plywood-pt seat lining
			4" Ø x 1'-0" plastic pipe & elbow
			6'-0" x 6" roll of copper or galv. insect screen & tacks (2lbs.)
Securing Stakes	4 pcs.	2"x4" x 3'-6"	
Hardware	3 doz.	1 1/2" aluminum nails & neoprene washers - roof	
		8	1/2" x 4" galv. bolts & washers - securing stakes (carriage bolts)
		1 pair	6" spring hinges
		1	Door latch (or bolt) or hasp & padlock
		4 lbs.	2" galv. nails - plywood to framework - floor - seat
		2	lb. galv. nails - roof & floor 2" x 4"
			Galv. coat hooks

GENERAL NOTES

- Treat all frame members with "Cuprinol" or "Timberlok"
- Outside finish - light brown stain
- Inside finish - white enamel paint
- No joints in plywood panels - sides - floor - seat top & front panel

Interior Health Plywood Pit Privy

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