

## Facilities Management from A to Z

Based on The FM Lexicon by Martin Pickard  
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## anitorials

The fact that most facility managers are responsible for the toilets in the workplace is often held up as one of the reasons for the job being held in low esteem in some quarters. However, this is a very important role with morale, compliance and wellness aspects as well as that of reputation. When visiting a potential new building or visiting a prospective employer or supplier a visit to the toilet is frequently used as an acid test to judge their ability to manage effectively. The same applies with FM professionals. If the toilets aren't in good order then it is unlikely that the FM will be invited to participate in corporate strategic planning.

In occupying or restacking a building it is important to ensure correct toilet provision. The rules of welfare facilities, as toilets are generally referred to in H&S legislation, are covered by the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 Regulation 20. This states that suitable and sufficient sanitary conveniences need to be provided at readily accessible places.

Guidance is given on what "adequate" means. For example the toilets must be adequately ventilated and lit and kept in a clean orderly condition. Walls and floors should preferably be tiled (or covered in suitable waterproof materials) to make them easier to clean. There must be a supply of toilet paper and, for female employees, a means of disposing of sanitary dressings. There should be washing facilities with hot and cold running water and enough soap or washing agents. The basin should be large enough to wash hands and forearm if necessary. There ought to be a means for drying hands such as cotton or paper towels or a hot air dryer.

On a large site or in high rise buildings it will be necessary to base the number of facilities provided in each separate area or floor on the number of users in that area, rather than an overall average for the whole site. Separate rooms containing conveniences should be provided for men and women unless each convenience is in a separate room the door of which is capable of being secured from inside. In addition, where separate facilities are provided for men and women, it is important to base the number on the actual distribution of gender in that area, rather than an assumption of a 50-50 split.

The HSE publish a free guide to the relevant legislation called "Welfare at Work" INDG 293. For more information see [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)