

Equip Tips

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Program

Unblocking Toilet Building Vents

IMPORTANT URGENT NOTICE

COBWEBS ARE BLOCKING THE AIR FLOW IN THE MAJORITY OF VAULT AND PIT-TYPE TOILET VENTS IN CAMPGROUNDS THROUGHOUT THE FOREST SERVICE AND IN THE FACILITIES OF OUR COOPERATORS! REMOVING COBWEBS FROM TOILET VENT STACKS WILL IMMEDIATELY IMPROVE THE ABILITY OF THE VENTS TO REMOVE ODORS FROM THE TOILET BUILDINGS.

THE BIG DISCOVERY

In the USDA Forest Service Southern Region (R-8), during the summer of 1989, a large vault toilet vent was found to be full of cobwebs. Since then, investigations by Briar Cook, the San Dimas Technology and Development Center (SDTDC) Program Leader for Recreation and Gary Hoshide, SDTDC Recreation Specialist, resulted in similar discoveries.

FIGHTING THE STENCH

THUS, WO-RECREATION ADVISES THAT A MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE SHOULD BE SET UP ON EACH FOREST SERVICE RANGER DISTRICT TO CLEAR ALL VENT PIPES IN TOILET BUILDINGS.

TO "TOP" OR NOT

Many of our toilet vents are capped by various devices, such as turbine ventilators, etc. These "tops" will have to be removed before the cobwebs can be cleaned out. BEFORE REPLACING ANY TOP, BE CERTAIN THAT IT IS MORE EFFECTIVE THAN AN OPEN-TOP PIPE FOR AIR FLOW; IF NOT, DISCARD THE TOP.

AVOID OFFSET VENT DESIGNS

Some newer vault toilets incorporate a heated attic design and have offset venting systems. A vent rises above the vault and terminates at the ceiling level, leaving a space in the attic. Another vent pipe extends

from the attic out of the roof; this second pipe is not connected to the vent coming up from the vault. This type of venting system is difficult to clean and should not be used.

DO NOT LET THE SMALL GET SMALLER

The existing vents on vault and pit-type toilets are, for the most part, already undersized and do not extend far enough above the roof of the building. If this pipe becomes clogged with cobwebs there could be no air flow whatsoever.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN

IT IS IMPORTANT TO ROUTINELY SCHEDULE COBWEB REMOVAL FROM THE VENT STACKS. THE FREQUENCY OF THE MAINTENANCE WILL HAVE TO BE DETERMINED RANGER DISTRICT BY RANGER DISTRICT. IN THE BEGINNING, SDTDC SUGGESTS A MONTHLY INSPECTION.

TOILET BUILDING VENTING DESIGN HINTS

All vault and pit toilet vents should be: (a) 12 inches in diameter (minimum), (b) 3 feet above the highest point of the toilet building roof peak, and (c) painted black on all surfaces exposed to the sun. Each vault toilet riser should have its own vault and a 12-inch vent. If screens must be used, use screening material that has, at the most, eight holes per inch.

