

Your Guide to Operating A Portable Restroom Business





The JohnTalk Promise

Everything you need to know when they need to go. That's our mission. The JohnTalk project is designed to be your go-to resource for all the information you need to start a portable sanitation operation or improve your existing portable restroom business. No matter the format: articles, videos, reports and how-to manuals – if it's important to the portable sanitation industry, we will provide it.

JohnTalk is sponsored by PolyJohn, a family-owned, leading manufacturer of portable toilets and sinks. PolyJohn is sponsoring this project because they are committed to the progress of the portable sanitation industry and the people in it, regardless of whether you are a PolyJohn customer or not.

Bottom line – Portable sanitation is a great industry to be in. The independent editorial team at JohnTalk wants you to have the information you need to thrive.

Brought to you by,



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Introduction

Welcome to the Portable Sanitation Industry

Congratulations on owning your own portable sanitation company. It's a career with many responsibilities and many rewards. You can do this!

Your opportunity to be successful will grow the more you know and learn about portable sanitation. The best way to learn about the job is to do the job. We think you'll enjoy it and learn quickly. But to help give you a head start, we have put together this operations manual to give you an overview of some of the most important parts of the business, including:

- Equipment and Supplies
- Day-to-Day Operation
- Special Events
- Human Resources
- Sales and Marketing

Just because portable sanitation is sometimes a one-person job doesn't mean you're alone out there. You have many other people and groups you can network with for more information and advice:

- **Your Business Mentor**

Someone who owns or has owned a portable sanitation business is a first-class source of experienced knowledge.



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Welcome to the Portable Sanitation Industry

- **Social Media Sites**

If you are into social networking, you can contact other owners like yourself on sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn. You can ask questions, “chat” about different subjects and, as you become more experienced, you can give advice as well!

There are several industry websites, including JohnTalk and promonthly.com that have many articles that offer practical advice for all aspects of the portable sanitation business.

- **Manufacturers and Suppliers**

When you buy or lease new equipment, stay in touch with your suppliers or the manufacturers. They know their products inside and out and can help you with any equipment questions. You'll be able to utilize professionals with years of industry experience.

- **PSAI**

Become a member of the Portable Sanitation Association International (PSAI) at psai.org. Among the many benefits of membership are PSAI's training program, certification program, PRO FINDER tool and Supplier Directory.



Introduction

Welcome to the Portable Sanitation Industry

- **Attend industry events, conferences, conventions and tradeshow**

Industry events are the best opportunities to network with your fellow operators, learn about new products and attend educational seminars. Check the PSAI Event Calendar for information.

- **YouTube videos**

Type "portable sanitation" for thousands of videos on many subjects.

We wish you success!



1. Equipment and Supplies

The Best Products for Your Needs



1. Equipment and Supplies

The Best Products for Your Needs

Every time your customers use one of your porta-johns, the experience must be first-rate. So, your ability to deliver excellent service depends on the quality of the products you choose.

Your inventory will be one of the largest financial investments you will make, so you want products and vehicles you can depend on, that are durable, easy to use and work with and appealing to your customers.

Fortunately, there are many choices. You will find that most of the equipment and supplies in the industry are of high quality. All the major industry suppliers offer excellent products, each with different features and strong points.

Where to Obtain Equipment & Supplies

BUYING/LEASING NEW

We recommend that you “test drive” the products, equipment and accessories by going to the websites of the major manufacturers and learning about their products. Do some comparison shopping — compare features, service, parts and warranties.

An excellent way to compare products in person is by attending the WWETT Show (Water and Wastewater, Equipment, Treatment and Transport), the world's largest annual tradeshow for wastewater and environmental services professionals. About 600 companies exhibit their products at WWETT. For more information, go to www.wwettshow.com/en/home.html.

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Don't hesitate to contact the manufacturers if you have additional questions or want to request a quote (most websites have a "request a quote" feature). Many will even welcome a personal visit to their facilities.

Manufacturers also post informational videos on YouTube. You can see how the products are made, assembled and much more.

The manufacturers will be able to help you find a local distributor in your area. Talk to the dealer about leasing options if that is your choice. You can also check the internet for other dealers in your vicinity.



The following are major manufacturers. There are others if you are interested in researching further.

Portable Toilets and Accessories

- PolyJohn - www.polyjohn.com
- Armal - www.amral.biz
- Sansom Industries - www.sansomindustries.com
- TSF Company, Inc. - www.tuff-jon.com
- 5 Peaks - www.fivepeaks.com
- PolyPortables - www.polyportables.com
- Satellite Industries - www.satelliteindustries.com
- T BLUSTAR - www.tblustar.com

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Trucks

- Amthor International - <http://amthorinternational.com>
- Crescent Tank - www.crescenttank.com
- KeeVac Industries, Inc. - www.keevac.com
- Satellite Industries - www.satelliteindustries.com
- Best Enterprises, Inc. - www.bestenterprises.net
- FlowMark- <http://flowmark.com>
- Pik Rite, Inc. - www.PikRite.com

Chemicals

While buying units and a truck are rare purchases, you will be buying chemicals on a regular basis. They make up a large part of your ongoing expenses.

The professionals recommend that you field test your products over time and under many conditions, such as heavy use and hot weather, and you will get a feel for the products that perform best for your particular needs. Let your nose and eyes do the work — the waste smell and coloration will tell you how effective your chemicals are.

The blue deodorizer brands are often sold at different performance levels or tiers. So when comparing one brand to another, make sure you are comparing the same levels, or “apples to apples.”



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Shop for quality and value. You want supplies that 1.) work well; 2.) are readily available and are delivered quickly; and 3.) meet your budget. Purchasing in bulk will save money.

- Polyjohn/Cooper's Own Brand Supplies - www.polyjohn.com/products/supplies/cooper-s-own/
- 5 Peaks/Glacier Bay - www.fivepeaks.net
- cpacex - www.cpacex.com
- PolyPortables/Green Way Products - www.polyportables.com
- Surco Portable Sanitation Products - www.surco.com
- Armal - www.armal.biz
- J & J Chemical - www.jjchem.com
- Satellite Industries/Safe-T-Fresh - www.safetfresh.com
- Walex - www.walex.com

BUYING USED

There are plenty of reliable sources of used equipment, especially the JohnTalk Classifieds (www.johntalk.com/classified), Pumper Magazine (www.pumper.com), PRO Monthly (www.promonthly.com), www.pumpertrader.com, Facebook and Craigslist are others. You will find sales ranging from individual units to an entire portable sanitation business. Some manufacturers sell used equipment or new equipment at reduced prices. Look for sellers near you.

Used equipment is an economical starting point. But as your business grows, commit to strengthening your image in the marketplace by investing in new units and equipment.

Equipment Maintenance

Your units and accessories are built rugged to withstand harsh weather and heavy usage. Even so, don't neglect your inventory.

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Each unit makes money for you, so take good care of your investment. Follow a regular routine for maintenance and storage that will keep your units in tip-top shape for long life.

Portable sanitation has two seasons — the busy season (or in season) and the slow season — especially in the regions of the country with colder winters. Each season has its own routine.

STAY ORGANIZED

No matter the time of year, the best storage practice we can recommend is to keep your yard organized. You may have seen the storage yard of a large portable sanitation company. What usually stands out is how neat it is, with row after organized row, even if there are hundreds of units. This is not just for looks. A well-ordered yard allows you to do inventory easily and access your units quickly, especially for emergencies or last-minute requests.

If you have different models, keep similar units together. Some models have gaps in the door that can allow a lot of dirt and dust to build up. Store them with the doors facing each other and sideways from vehicle traffic.

THAT'S WHY THEY CALL IT THE BUSY SEASON

When you have an established business, your units will probably be in almost constant use throughout the busy season, so you will be cleaning and maintaining them on an almost daily basis. You may have a quick turnaround time to get your units back into action!



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Units at construction sites are there long-term, so most of the units returning are from special events. These are usually the nicer-looking or newer units that you have. Your routine might be slightly different, but here are maintenance steps that cover all the bases:

1. Pump the units when you pick them up at the site. Remove the garbage and toilet paper.
2. Back at your yard, line up the units to be cleaned in rows. Keep similar models together for easier cleaning.
3. Check for graffiti that you will need to remove (more about graffiti later).
4. Pump waste residue, rinse out the tank and under the lip of the stool area.
5. Scrub the units inside and out.
6. Rinse or pressure wash. You may want to fill the unit with five gallons of water at this point. Do a final check for damage. Make sure each unit still has your company sticker on it.
7. Add toilet paper.

SLOW SEASON ISN'T SLOW

As events tail off and you enter your “slow season,” you will be storing more units for longer periods. But keep in mind that your portable sanitation business is still a year-round business. Your “downtime” has an upside — you can use your time to quality-check your inventory.

1. Continue to maintain a neat and orderly yard.
2. If your area has freezing weather, add some RV-type antifreeze to the lines of the sinks and flushable units you are storing. Keep drain plugs open to help prevent any ice that might form from expanding and cracking the reservoirs.

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3. Analyze your inventory. Take a good look at each unit. Is a unit showing wear and tear? It may be time to use that worn-looking unit on construction sites instead of special events. Consider adding to your inventory with some new toilets or a new category of upgraded units (flushable, sinks, etc.).
4. Repair damaged units. Separate them into one group.
5. Restock parts. While repairing units, make a list of some of the most common parts that may need to be replaced throughout the year, such as toilet seats, urinals, mirrors, door springs and hinges. You'll be more responsive to your customers' needs when you can make minor repairs on the fly.



During your first year, it might make economic sense to order parts only as you need them, or restock in small quantities, perhaps no more than 5 toilet seats, 5 mirrors, 5 urinals and a few door springs. During your slow season, you can re-evaluate your needs, review the parts you ordered during the year, and re-order, stocking your inventory with a few additional parts as a buffer for the next season.

If you have a damaged unit that you decide to pull out of circulation, don't let it go to waste. Strip the unit of working parts that are in good condition, such as the skid, vent stack, screens, side walls, tank and roof.

Taking stock of your inventory during the slow season will ensure your busy season stays busy!

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SAFE TRANSPORTATION OF EQUIPMENT

Transporting your portable toilets is a large part of your business. You'll be on the road almost every day.

Safety should always be your first priority. There's no room for anything less than a complete commitment to safety in every aspect of loading and moving. You certainly don't want to hurt yourself, and the last thing you want to happen is a unit to topple off your truck while driving down the highway.

The second important matter is efficiency. It costs you money and time to move your units to and from a site, so you want to be as efficient as possible.

Trucks and trailers manufactured for the portable sanitation industry are well-designed to secure your load. Use them correctly and maintain them, and they will help you get your units where they need to go.

Consider how your inventory and your trucks or trailers will match each other. It's easy — just load your truck and see how the units fit!



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Trucks and trailers come in different configurations with many features:

- Standard pumpers typically hold 2 basic units or 1 handicap-accessible unit
- Flatbed trucks range in size and capabilities from about 6 to 12 units
- Combo trucks, or hybrids, can usually carry about 4 to 8 units
- Transport trailers can range anywhere from 8 to 48 feet in length and can carry up to 20 units

Loading

To load a unit from your yard, first prepare the unit by removing or securing the toilet paper and closing the door.

When loading a unit from a site, first make sure no one is inside! Pump the waste, then secure the toilet paper and close the door before moving.

Drop the tailgate so the truck is ready

Slide a dolly under the skid from the rear of the unit. Put your foot on the axle of the dolly. Grab the rear corners of the unit as high up as you can, one hand for each corner. Pull the unit backward towards you. You are pulling towards the top and keeping the bottom from moving with your foot. This will prop the unit on the dolly wheels where it can maneuver easily. The trick is to keep the unit balanced over the axle. You should be able to quickly master this important skill.

Next, dolly the unit to the loading zone of your truck (usually the rear). Push the unit right up to the lip of the tailgate so the front-

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most part of the skid is on top of your rack. (Some unit models have a molded catch in the skid so the unit can rest in place at this point.) Hold the unit steady and push it the rest of the way up the truck. Push with your legs, not your back.

Some operators use a hand truck called a Super Mongo Mover with 4, 6 or 8 tires and a tall handle for greater maneuverability and easier loading and unloading of portable restrooms.

Transporting

Professionals often turn the units so the doors are facing the back of the truck to prevent scratching and keep bugs from sticking to the front of the unit.

With the unit in place, use ratchet straps to secure it — one in the middle and one at the bottom, just over the skid. Some restroom trailers are designed to strap over the skid with the front of the unit secured under a steel rail. Follow the truck or trailer manufacturer's recommendations for securing your load.

With your units secured, you can safely drive the speed limit on any road.

Unloading

To unload, slide the unit to the edge of your truck. While you are on the ground, slide the unit halfway off, tilt back gently and let gravity do its job. Guide the unit so the rear of the skid touches down first, then gently let the rest of the skid hit the ground.

Move the unit to the desired location. Make sure the ground is level, or level the unit by chocking up one side with 2-by-4s.

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DEALING WITH GRAFFITI AND VANDALISM DAMAGE

Graffiti and vandalism aren't your fault, but unless you deal with it, it can make an unfavorable impression on your customers and even force you to take a unit out of service or replace it.

To clean graffiti, chemical manufacturers offer liquid or aerosol graffiti removal products made specifically for the portable sanitation industry, such as Cooper's Own Graffiti Remover, ArtBlaster and BANISH. These products are more effective the longer they can work on the affected area, so tackle graffiti first before you pump the tank and finish your other cleaning tasks. Apply the solution to the graffiti and let it work, then wipe off with a rag, specially designed eraser pad (usually purchased with the solution) or scouring pad for especially tough graffiti. Rinse thoroughly.

Vandalism can be more difficult to repair. Common vandalism includes cutting or etching into the plastic with a knife, drilling holes and damage to doors, urinals, vents and other parts. Vandals have even burned entire units.

Some operators will repair minor damage such as etching by



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grinding it off or melting the area. It may be better to simply replace the entire wall panel. Replacement may also be the best solution for damage to doors, urinals, vents and other parts.

You should cover vandalism and graffiti in your service contract. This is from a sample agreement:

Lessor and lessee agree that lessee shall not be responsible to repair a unit for ordinary wear and tear, but agree that 'graffiti' and/or markings of any nature upon or within a unit is not reasonable wear and tear and is damage for which lessee is responsible.

If you charge your customer, include an itemized list of expenses and the labor rate on your invoice. If you feel that the damage is serious enough, file a report with the police.

WINTERIZATION

The good news is winter is becoming a more popular time for outdoor events. Winter carnivals, skating rinks, holiday lights and running events are getting people outside and giving you more opportunities to make money.

The bad news? It's freezing out there!

For portable sanitation businesses in colder climates, winter presents different challenges than the busy season. But if you prepare well (and add a few extra layers of clothing), your business can continue to prosper.

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Freezing temperatures can dramatically affect an unprotected restroom. Plastic can crack, and parts turn brittle in the cold. Water and liquid waste can do lots of damage. Water left in a sink can freeze, resulting in leaks or cracks. And when the water in your fresh water tank could freeze solid before you reach your customers, and the waste in your waste tank could freeze before you can drive to your dump site, those are big problems!

There are six common ways to fight freeze-up:

1. Brine solutions made with rock salt
2. De-icing salt solution or crystal
3. Methanol
4. Methanol plus rock salt
5. De-icing additives
6. Switch-out or split tanks

Brine solutions are probably the least expensive way to fight freeze-ups. A half-pound of rock salt per gallon of water will keep tanks from freezing down to 26°F. By using 2 pounds of salt per gallon, tanks are safe down to 0°F. (Two pounds is the limit. Adding more salt won't make the solution more effective.) Adjust your salt levels to the predicted temperature extreme. You don't need to use 2



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pounds per gallon when a half-pound would do.

Mix the brine solution in your shop. It doesn't have to be complicated. One easy method is to set up a mixing tank with an agitator or augur, determine the correct ratio of salt and water, mix thoroughly, then pump the solution into your truck. To avoid salt water buildup in your pump, run fresh water through it after each use.

In colder regions such as the Northeast U.S., operators prefer to add up to 5 pounds of rock salt solution into the urinal. Every time the urinal is used, it drains into the tank and adds a little more salt to the solution. Look for urinals designed to hold at least 5 pounds of salt.

The disadvantage of brine is its corrosiveness to steel. You must have stainless or aluminum tanks and corrosion-resistant fittings on your trucks, or the brine will corrode them. When brine dries, it leaves a white chalk stain, so be sure to wipe everything down with fresh water. Don't clean toilets with brine solution. Use a windshield washer fluid mix.

De-icing salt or magnesium chloride ($MgCl_2$) can be purchased as a crystal or in a 30% liquid solution. While more expensive than rock salt, it provides protection at lower temperatures. Using 2.25 pounds per gallon provides temperature protection to $-26^{\circ}F$.

Methanol is more expensive than salt, but it's easy to use (just pour it in), and it's also non-corrosive. At 33% methanol (approximately 42 oz/gal), tanks are protected from freezing down to $-9^{\circ}F$. A mix of 2 pounds of salt and 40 ounces of methanol per gallon will protect a tank from freezing down to $-40^{\circ}F$.

However, methanol can be extremely dangerous if not used correctly. A mix higher than 33% and your tanks become flammable. It's highly toxic when swallowed and harmful if you breathe too much of the vapors. Always use eye protection and rubber gloves

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when handling or mixing. Never use undiluted methanol near electric equipment such as pumps, since the slightest spark could lead to a disaster.

Anyone using methanol should understand the National Fire Protection Association's Flammable and Combustible Liquids Code #30. You can get a copy of it online at www.nfpa.org.

De-icing additives are a blend of chlorides that the operator drops directly into a fresh toilet tank. You just scoop pellets into the toilet and urinal of a freshly serviced unit. They dissolve in the solution and can protect the tank from freezing down to -25°F, which makes them even more effective than methanol or brine. De-icing additives are a convenient solution that saves the operator the hassles of mixing corrosive salt solutions, the danger of methanol and the extra workload and cost of switching out.

In the really cold places such as Northern Canada and Alaska, many operators use a simple switch-out method. They bring a clean toilet to the site and remove the frozen one back to the shop to thaw until it can be pumped and cleaned.

A better solution than switching the whole unit is to use split tanks. Split tanks replace the normal collection tank in a unit with a half-size tank. Rather than driving a service route with a fresh toilet for each site, the operator just needs to bring a new tank. The used tank is collected and returned to the shop for cleaning.

To cover your increased costs, you may decide to charge customers a winterization fee.

Other suggestions to prevent freezing include placing units against the wall of a building to protect them from wind, covering the vent stack to prevent wind from blowing inside the tank, taping vents on the windward side or packing snow or straw around the

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base to protect the tank from wind. As you may know, wind chill factor can lower the temperature of liquids, making them freeze sooner. PolyJohn Canada has even developed the Porta Kote, which is like an insulated jacket for the unit to combat freezing temperatures.

CLEANING TRUCKS

If you take pride in your portable sanitation business — and we know you will — then you'll take pride in the appearance of your truck or trucks. Your truck, along with your units, are the best free advertising you can have. They demonstrate that your company has what customers want — a commitment to cleanliness and reliability.

Set a goal of cleaning your truck once a week, and perhaps more often if your route is heavy on construction sites or industrial areas. Remove any jugs of liquid blue from the truck before washing, or you may end up with a blue puddle in your wash bay!

Rinse out the tanks of the truck once or twice a year to remove sediment. Clean the site bubbles quarterly, or whenever they become hard to see.



2. Day-to-Day Operation

Run a Lean Machine

2. Day-to-Day Operation

Run a Lean Machine

An efficient portable sanitation business helps you deliver excellent service, holds down your costs and maximizes your income.

With good planning, proven routines for your daily operations and plans in place to deal with the unexpected, you have the framework on which successful businesses are built. You have the tools you need to perform professionally.

One of the first things you learn on the job is that every day offers challenges and opportunities. You will be prepared for both.

Service

The best compliment an owner-operator can receive is to have a reputation for excellent service. It's how you get customers and how you get customers to keep coming back. Word gets around!

Start-to-finish, top-quality service has many qualities — clean units, on-time delivery, knowledge and experience, professional behavior and responsiveness to emergencies, to name just a few. The level of service you provide depends on the preparation, hard work and pride you put in.

PUMPING AND CLEANING PROCEDURES

The following series of steps is a practical approach for pumping and cleaning. Other operators may do it differently. Find out what works best for you. Once you're used to your routine, the entire process should take only a few minutes per unit.

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1. Sign and date the service record sticker inside the unit
2. Remove trash and debris from unit — Instead of making a trip to the garbage can or truck for every unit, pile any trash outside and collect it all at Step 12 below (clean up area around unit). Some operators use their “wand” to move the debris. A wand is the extension that clamps on to the suction end of your pump-out hose.
3. Vacuum the tank — Put the wand all the way to the bottom and tilt it to one side. This helps prevent debris from getting into the wand and clogging the hose. Once the waste level is lower, you will be able to more easily see potential clog hazards.
4. Remove objects from the tank — Use the wand or a grabber to remove debris.
5. Scrub the urinal — Spray or scrub the urinal with a product designed to eliminate urine and calcium build-up.
6. Clean the tank and opening lid — Clean the lip inside the tank right under the seat. If you have a recirculating flush toilet, make sure to empty the contents of the hose by giving it a few flushes after being pumped. Then pump it again.
7. Clean the floor — Unit floors take a beating, so give them a solid scrubbing. Don't forget the bottom half of the door — many people push the door open with their foot.



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8. Add water and chemicals — Five gallons is the standard amount of water for weekly rentals. For high usage, consider adding 7 gallons. The chemicals work only if the waste is submerged, so the more water, the better.
9. Wipe down and dry the unit — The most important area to dry is the seat and top of the tank. Your customers do not want to sit on a wet toilet seat!
10. Install new toilet paper — A standard roll is 1000 sheets. Larger rolls (2500 sheets) mean changing less often.
11. Install urinal block — Using a urinal block doesn't mean you don't have to clean the urinal. Due to the cost of blocks, some operators choose a less expensive alternative by cleaning (Step 5) and simply using liquid deodorizer.
12. Clean up the area around the unit — Including the debris you have removed from the unit. Place in the garbage or in a bucket on your truck to dispose of later.
13. Always be courteous and thoughtful — Make sure the unit is placed in a good location for both you and the customer.

PSAI CERTIFICATION

You can reach a higher level of professionalism, add credibility to your company and offer top-quality customer service by becoming a Certified Portable Sanitation Professional (CPSP).

To become a CPSP, join Portable Sanitation Association International (PSAI) and take their certification program, which includes a Basic Service Technician training course.

We highly recommend taking the course. Training includes portable restrooms (inspection, cleaning, delivery, placement, pickup), handwash stations, fresh water flush units, recirculating flush units and restroom trailers. Other topics include disposal, winter service procedures and spill-handling procedures.

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When you pass the exam at the conclusion of the course, you will be a CPSP. PSAI Certification is valid for 3 years.

For more information, visit <http://psai.org/about-certification>.

COMMON ISSUES AND PROCEDURES ON HOW TO DEAL WITH THEM

We asked a group of industry professionals to provide a Top 10 list of common issues you'll face on the job. As usual, they went above and beyond and offered a Top 12 list.

1. Clogged hose

Bottle caps, diapers, golf balls, work gloves — it's amazing what can end up in your hose. A clogged hose costs you time and money. If the clog is close enough to the opening, you can pull out the object with pliers. For harder clogs, you can try switching the ends of the hose or pushing the clog with a long rod, such as rebar. In extreme cases, you may have to cut open the hose, so it's a good idea to carry hose repair tools as well as a backup hose. (We recommend doing this in your shop and using your spare hose to complete your route for the day.)

2. Graffiti

Review the information on graffiti and vandalism on page 19.

3. Unit is blocked by equipment, trucks or due to rain

Locate or call the renter or person in charge of the site, such as the foreman. Be courteous, and explain that you can wait only a few minutes for the equipment to be moved. If this isn't possible, give them the option of waiting until the next scheduled service (free) or coming back at another time (extra charge).



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Run a Lean Machine

Sometimes, a unit becomes inaccessible because heavy rains flood the grounds around it. Usually, when this happens, the unit hasn't been used much anyway. Explain to the person in charge why you couldn't pump the unit. Give it a quick wipe down and add some extra blue to the tank. Your customers will appreciate it!

4. Unit is inaccessible due to locked gate

If there are posted site hours and you are within that timeframe, contact the customer. If the gate is always locked during your service route schedule (and no one is present), ask for a copy of the key or code number.

5. Unit has been moved

Look around to see if you can find the unit, then contact the customer for more information. Some customers move the unit themselves. Sometimes a unit can be stolen! There are times when a company may move the unit to a new site. If this happens, be sure to update the address listed on the paperwork. Also, ask the foreman to notify you if it happens again so you don't waste time driving to the wrong location. Lost time is lost money. Inspect the unit and make sure it is on level ground.

6. Unit has been damaged

Take photos and notify a foreman or person in charge. Keep the unit in place until a responsible person is able to see the damage. Replacement and repair costs are usually covered in your service agreement (which is why we fully recommend having one!).

7. Extreme usage/tank very full

While this may happen occasionally at special events, if it becomes a trend (for example, at a construction site), notify the foreman or person in charge. Ask how many people they have per toilet — the industry standard is 1 unit for every 10 people working 40 hours. This is an opportunity for you — your customer may need another unit!

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8. Toilet paper rod missing

Consider using rod locks. Always stock replacements on your truck.

9. Truck full of waste

If your waste tank is full before the end of your route, your only choice is to go to your dump site. Avoid this misstep by checking your waste level before beginning the day, and monitor the level regularly. It's dangerous to over-fill your truck. If your tank becomes full while pumping, the waste in the hose will have nowhere to go. Trying to put it back in the toilet can lead to a nasty spill!

10. Spilled blue

Although not a severe environmental hazard, this chemical solution can leave an unsightly blue stain. Break out your spill kit and clean it up ASAP! Spraying it down with water will only spread the chemical and leave a bigger stain. If you don't have a spill kit, use oil dry and clean with graffiti remover and bleach.

11. Customers want service at a different time or day

If it is inconvenient but you can do it, consider adding a service charge. Find out what the issue is to see if more convenient arrangements can be made.

12. Customers want another unit

This is a great problem to have! If you can, consider carrying an extra unit to cover this possibility. If you don't have an extra when a customer asks, consider waiving a fee if they can wait until your next scheduled service.

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SERVICE SCHEDULING

Scheduling the units for cleaning isn't difficult. You should quickly get the hang of it.

A good rule of thumb is to begin by putting customers on a scheduled cleaning once a week. For special events that run for more than one day, clean each unit before the next day's events begin.

If a long-term customer isn't using the unit much, you may recommend (or they may ask for) service every other week. You might offer a small discount when a customer reduces service.

On the other hand, some sites have such high usage that they will need to be cleaned twice or three times a week. Some pros have even needed to clean a unit as much as twice a day, 7 days a week!

When you have to increase the cleaning schedule, charge accordingly. Figure your added expenses in mileage, time, disposal fees and also "opportunity cost." This is the money you may have been making doing something else if you weren't busy with the extra service.



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If extra servicing is necessary, first ask your clients if they would accept additional restrooms instead of doubling the service. You have fewer costs servicing 4 units once a week than 2 units twice a week.

Customers may have special requests, such as servicing their units on a particular day or time. You should always try to meet their needs if they are reasonable — but charge accordingly.

Whatever your schedules are, always remember — service with a smile!

Routing

As a portable sanitation owner, you will spend most of your business day on your service route, so its importance can't be underestimated. It will have an impact on your business every single day. In practice, it will probably take you longer at the beginning to complete your route as you learn the ropes. Once your route is established and is working for you, you should get to know it like an old friend.

One experienced pro offers five tips to create a well-planned route that will serve your customers and take you on a trip to success.

1. Be efficient

Plan your route to have as many services per driven mile as possible. Keep routes tight. You will save time and fuel, increase productivity and profitability and eliminate unnecessary wear and tear on your equipment.

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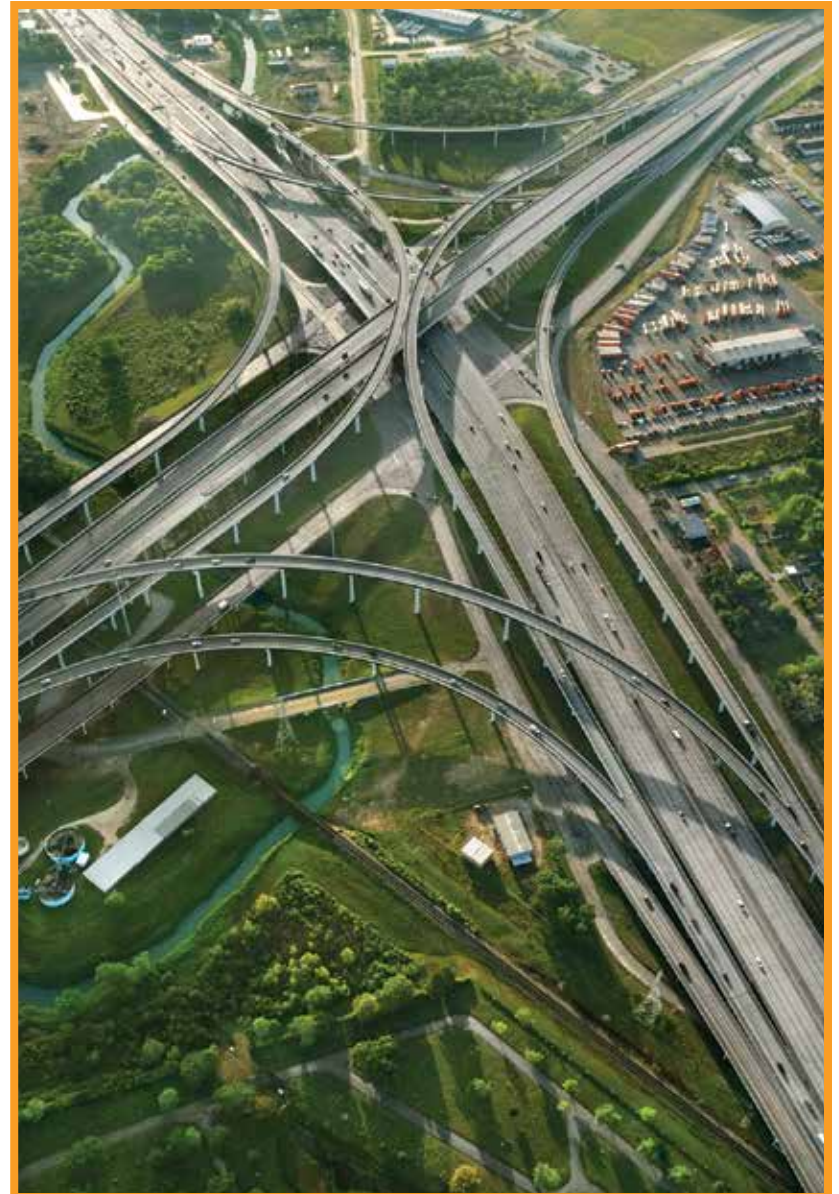
Efficiency also means thinking ahead. Be prepared and plan for emergencies or extra business by carrying an extra unit or two on your truck. A quick response in these situations (since you won't have to go back to your yard to pick up a spare) is a great way to attract and keep satisfied customers.

But don't try to be more efficient by cutting corners. Always meet your customers' expectations. A few weeks of poor service can cost your business greatly.

Time is everything. An efficient route gives you more time in your day for other aspects of your business, such as making extra deliveries, sprucing up your units or catching up on billing and paperwork. It can even help you get home in time to make it to your son or daughter's soccer game!

2. Let demographics and geography help decide your routes

Draw your routes based on where and how your customers are grouped. In cities, stops are usually closer together. Rural areas tend to be more spread out. Try using natural boundaries like highways and rivers to map the efficient route.



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3. Divide your route into sections that are serviced on the same days of the week

As you gain customers, you may eventually have so many that you can't handle all of them in one day. You will need to divide them into two (or more) routes that you service on separate days.

Using the first two points above, let efficiency and geography guide you in making the new routes. For example, you might have "central city Monday" or "westside Wednesday." By being consistent and having an organized routine, your customers will know what to expect, and you will have a starting point to help schedule new business.

4. Become familiar with traffic patterns and construction areas

Be like a traffic reporter in a helicopter and take a bird's-eye view. Check traffic reports for delays. Avoid the worst roads for rush-hour traffic. Especially in summer, know where all the road construction projects are. Then you can decide the best place to be at the right time of day. Remember, you won't make money staring out the windshield.

5. Know your limits

Make the most of your route by considering total miles, number of stops and number of toilets and sinks. Plan for about 5 minutes per toilet. But remember, you can only service so many units in a day. Keep in mind that your truck also has limitations, such as water capacity. Don't spread yourself too thin by trying to be everywhere at once. Set boundaries, and don't go past them.

MANUAL OR SOFTWARE?

As your business grows and you need to create more routes, you might consider route-planning software programs. A growing number of companies are using them. Keep checking the internet. With new and evolving technologies, there could soon be a

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program that is just right for your needs.

Here are some current software programs for portable sanitation companies that include route planning and service scheduling among their features:

- ARM Portable Sanitation and Toilet Rental - www.armsoftware.com/industries/portable-toilet
- AMCS Portable Toilet Management - www.amcsgroup.com/us/portable-toilet-management
- Ritam Technologies LLC Summit Route Management™ - www.ritam.com/routingtools
- The Service Program - <http://theserviceprogram.com/industries/portable-toilet-software.htm>
- RouteOptix - www.routeoptix.com
- Real Green Systems Service Assistant - www.realgreen.com
- EZtrakR Software - www.eztrakr.com/eztrakr

Efficiencies — Monetize Things That Cost You Money

Your goal is to run a profitable company. So, if something costs you money, you should look for ways to make back that money or to “monetize” it. It’s a necessity of doing business to constantly look for these types of “efficiencies.”

Let fairness and customer service guide your decisions. If a product or service costs you extra money above the basic delivery and cleaning of a unit, it’s fair to charge for them. If you incur additional expenses due to a situation that wasn’t anticipated or was nobody’s fault, splitting the cost is a fair compromise.

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Don't forget "opportunity cost." This is the money you may have been making doing something else if you weren't busy with the extra service.

You can sometimes anticipate extra charges. For example, if a unit is to be placed on the ground instead of concrete or there is no protection from wind or if strong winds are predicted, you could recommend moving the unit to a more stable location or staking down the unit for an extra fee. You would explain that the alternative is the possibility of paying a tip-over fee (plus the dangers of someone getting hurt).

Always be open to an honest discussion with your customers. Be upfront about costs. Create a chart or listing of additional fees for reference, and itemize them on your billing. Include certain efficiencies (such as vandalism repair, disposal fees and fuel surcharges) to your service contract.

A good indicator as to whether or not you should charge additional fees is to know what fees other service companies are collecting. For example, if local dumpster companies add a fuel surcharge (or disposal, environmental, etc.), it shows that the market in your service area is already accustomed to accepting that type of fee.

You don't have to rush into charging fees, but here's a Top 10 list of efficiencies you can monetize. You'll see that some items have been mentioned before in the manual as reasons to charge extra. You can certainly add to the list. Not all companies monetize the

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following items or monetize only a few.

1. Delivery Fee
2. Disposal Fee
3. Fuel Surcharge
4. Winterization — Additional costs of keeping units from freezing
5. Vandalism and Graffiti — Usually included in the service contract
6. Emergencies and Last-Minute Requests
7. Service at a Particular Time or Day
8. Hand Sanitizer — Construction sites are requesting hand sanitizer more often
9. Staking Down a Unit
10. Tip-Over Cleaning Charge — If you are cleaning a tipped-over unit on your regular schedule, you may consider waiving the fee

Tips for Surviving the Busy Season

Being busy is exactly what you want — although, during the busy season, you may not think so at the time.

The busy season usually runs from June through September, although it can be shorter or longer by months. It's the time when it seems like everyone needs porta-johns. You'll probably find yourself working long hours almost every day and every weekend, getting up early and staying late. The busy season can be a real endurance test. That's why you'll often hear owner-operators talk

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about “surviving” the busy season.

The payoff is worth all of your hard work. Most portable sanitation businesses make a large percentage of their annual income during the busy season — some may earn up to 80%.

Here are a few “survival” tips:

- **Choose your customers carefully**

You may not be able to say yes to every customer who calls. Charge a premium for the weekend rentals to make the ones you do rent to worthwhile. If you team up with other portable sanitation companies, you can recommend them to the potential customer if you are unable to handle their request.

Don't neglect your repeat or long-time customers during this time. They deserve your best service as well.

- **Offer incentives**

You'll have many weekend rentals that require a Friday or Saturday setup. If you have a route in the area, offer a discount to deliver it on your regularly scheduled run (for example, a Wednesday or Thursday). It will save you an extra trip and make the weekend delivery schedule easier.

Here are some additional personal tips:



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- **Prepare yourself, family and friends**

Go into the busy season with a positive attitude and accept the fact that you'll be working long hours. Let your family and friends know ahead of time that you often won't be available due to your increased hours.

- **Keep your health in mind**

Drink plenty of water. Protect yourself from the sun. Eat regular meals.

- **Talk to your business mentor**

If your business mentor has had portable sanitation experience, he or she can offer practical advice.

- **Talk it out with other owners**

Go on JohnTalk, Facebook or other social media sites dedicated to portable sanitation owner-operators (if you have time!). It's a good way to share advice, let off steam and even hear stories from your colleagues who know exactly what you're going through.



Emergency/Backup Planning

Emergencies are situations that you need to deal with now, not days from now. The best way to handle an emergency is to have a plan in place before it happens. You may not be able to prevent an emergency, but you can reduce its effect on your business.

BUSINESS EMERGENCIES

Here are 10 emergencies that operators commonly face:

1. Truck breaks down
2. Stolen or destroyed unit
3. Chemical spill
4. Vacuum pump malfunction
5. Waste disposal problem
6. Upset customer
7. Damaged customer property
8. Competitor is directly undercutting your price and targeting your customers
9. Customers request items you don't have
10. You are busier than you can handle

1. Truck breaks down

Before buying a truck, make it a priority to check around for local repair shops or a trusted mechanic that can work on the make of truck you want, unless you have the skills and time to troubleshoot and fix it yourself. Is the truck still under warranty? Always

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perform the recommended scheduled maintenance.

In the meantime, if you have a backup truck, you could combine routes or run one route in the day and another at night. As a last resort, another portable sanitation company may be able to take over your route for a short time, but expect to be charged a premium rate.

Finally, what was the overall condition of the truck? Is it time to buy another? Don't rush into a quick purchase that you might regret later.

2. Stolen or destroyed unit

How will the loss of one unit affect your service? Do you have enough units to cover?

How is this situation covered in your service contract? The customer is usually responsible for the cost of replacing a unit that has been stolen or destroyed. Talk to the police (have the vandals been caught?) and your insurance agent to help you decide how to proceed.

If you decide to buy a new replacement unit, review your inventory. Perhaps it's time to buy more units or to upgrade some units.

3. Chemical spill

Always keep a spill kit on the truck. Read and understand the chemical's Safety Data Sheet (SDS) BEFORE using them. Act immediately!

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4. Vacuum pump malfunction

Consult your troubleshooting guide or contact the dealer or manufacturer for expert advice. If you have mechanical skills, stock a "rebuild kit" in your shop. As you grow your fleet of trucks, consider using one brand of vacuum pump.

5. Problems disposing of waste

Know the location, times and requirements of other nearby disposal sites if your primary dump site is suddenly unavailable or inaccessible. Store waste in holding tanks if available. Is there a local septic company that can provide a truck for temporary holding?

Warning — don't break the law by dumping illegally!

6. Upset customers

While customers aren't always right, you need to listen to their complaints and resolve the problem. Talk to your business mentor for advice about customer service, or chat with other portable sanitation owners on internet social media sites to share information. The internet has a lot of helpful information.

Professionals offer 10 steps to resolving customer complaints:

1. Remember that a customer with a complaint is not an adversary.
2. Don't counter their objections. Instead, move into their corner. Find common ground. Use statements such as: "I understand that you are unhappy, and I want to do everything possible to correct the situation."

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3. Search for the truth by asking who they think is responsible, what they think can be done, where the problem occurs, when it occurs and how they think it can be solved. Accept your customer's opinions, even if you don't agree with them.
4. Listen, find areas of agreement and make assurances that you will handle the problem. If you are with your customer, maintain eye contact.
5. Try not to feel threatened, even if your customer is in a threatening mood.
6. If the customer asks you questions, keep your answers short. Don't talk for more than 30 seconds without returning the conversation to them. Nobody wants to hear a long-winded excuse.
7. Don't anticipate your customer's point of view. Avoid interrupting your customer, and allow them to vent their frustrations.
8. Repeat what your customer says and ask if this is what they really mean — for example, “What I hear you saying is this ... Is that what you mean?” Then, phrase your suggestions for addressing the problem as questions rather than directives, such as, “Would it take care of the problem if we did this ...?”
9. Immediately after the conversation, write down everything you remember. Note the nature of the complaint, solutions that were discussed, action steps for solving the problem and the date and time of a follow-up meeting.
10. Finally, be proactive with your quiet customers. The solutions you find for your “complaining” customer can be used to improve service with other customers.

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7. Damaged customer property

You might have scraped a tree, dinged a mailbox or left tire ruts in a field. Even minor damage might be important to a customer. Clearly explain the situation, and apologize. Offer to work out a reasonable fix for both parties. For a regular customer, you may offer a discount or incentive for the next service visit.

8. Competitor is directly undercutting your price and targeting your customers

Don't get into a race to the bottom. Sell on service, not price. Keep in touch with your customers and remind them how important good service is. Customers usually realize after a short time not to trust in the businesses that sell short.

9. Customers request items you don't have

Keep track of requests. If you continue to hear the same one, research the possibility of adding it to your list of services.

10. You are busier than you can handle

Buy more inventory and hire! You have a growing business!

CUSTOMER SERVICE EMERGENCIES

When your customers have a problem that needs to be dealt with now, your quick service response can turn their emergency into



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your opportunity. Pros tell us that more often than you would expect, it's hard to get a portable sanitation business to respond to an emergency. They may not be available by phone or fail to deliver as promised. Emergencies offer significant profit (remember, you can monetize emergency service) and the opportunity to gain new customers by proving your service capabilities.

10 common reasons for immediate service requests:

1. Sewer backed up/septic tank full
2. Planned water shut-off
3. Another vendor let them down
4. Misplanned
5. Overlooked the need
6. Attendance numbers skyrocketed and more facilities are needed than originally ordered
7. Someone made a mess in the unit
8. Unit tipped over
9. "More workers on the site this week, so we need an extra cleaning."
10. Out of toilet paper

1. Sewer backed up/septic tank full

A common occurrence. Portable units are needed because indoor facilities are unavailable until the plumbing specialists arrive.

2. Planned water shut-off

When municipalities have to restrict water due to an emergency, construction or other planned shut-off, it can result in wide-spread business and residential rental opportunities across a section of the city.

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3. Another vendor let them down

Experts tell us they've heard this conversation many times: "[Another company] was supposed to deliver a unit today but didn't. I've called them three times and they won't answer. Can you help me out?" It's time for you to be the hero!

4. Misplanned

For example, two people responsible for planning an event each think the other ordered the porta-john. Neither one realizes they didn't order it until everything else is already delivered and the event has started.

5. Overlooked the need

A common situation might be a party in a park. The previous year, there was a unit at the park, but this year there isn't.

6. Attendance numbers skyrocketed and more facilities are needed than originally ordered

This is a great problem to have, both for the event planners and your business. Make sure to note the attendance increase in your files. We've seen from experience that many event planners will forget the need for more units by the following year.

7. Someone made a mess in the unit

An unscheduled cleaning. Some construction sites forget to lock the unit over the weekend, and unauthorized users make the toilet unusable until it is cleaned.

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8. Unit tipped over

A frequent problem on long-term construction sites. Usually, kids or the wind are the culprits. The main concern at construction sites is meeting OSHA requirements for portable toilets.

9. "More workers on the site this week, so we need an extra cleaning."

Construction schedules change, so there could easily be more than double the crew from one day to the next. Check to see if the site is meeting OSHA requirements.

10. Out of toilet paper

You might hear this request often if the toilet paper isn't locked. The easiest and least expensive solution for the customer is to buy some toilet paper at the store until your next scheduled servicing. If it is the first time this has happened with this customer, or they are a good contract to have, you may consider bringing toilet paper out to them. If it becomes a recurring issue, consider charging them for the extra trips. Carry extra toilet paper on your truck at all times. Don't let it get wet!

Prices and Billing

It's the million-dollar question — how much should I charge my customers?

There are so many things that help a professional decide on the prices he or she will charge — your inventory, your route and your financial goals to name a few — that we can't give you a definite answer, but we can point you in the right direction.

This is a topic you definitely need to discuss with your business mentor, especially if your mentor is familiar with your service area

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and knows the distances you will travel, the groupings of your customers, the cost of fuel in your area and your competition.

To also give you a general sense of prices in your area, ask your friends or business associates if they have recently rented a portable toilet or filled out a "request for quote" form from a local company for an event. Ask any friends in construction about their costs for long-term rental.

OPTIONS HELP DETERMINING PRICING

Customers like having choices. Give them a range of product options and prices.

Most of the industry divides rentals into two categories:

- Special Events
- Construction/monthly

The Special Event options might include:

- Standard units
- Standard units with sinks
- Deluxe units (sink and recirculating flush toilet)
- Handicap-accessible units
- ADA-compliant units
- Sinks
- Hand sanitizing stands



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Construction/monthly rentals usually offer fewer options:

- Standard units
- Handicap-accessible units
- Sinks

Accessories can bring in extra income. Lights are a common extra charge for special events. At a work site, hand sanitizer is a popular extra to offer.

Estimates vary greatly by region, area and economy, but here are some ballpark rental rates for a single day or weekend event and long-term rental:

- Standard unit: \$100
- Handicap-accessible unit: \$175 to \$250
- Deluxe unit: \$225
- Construction sites: \$75 to \$100 per month

DON'T FORGET DISCOUNTS

The numbers above are examples of standard prices you might charge, but volume discounts are common, especially for special events. A discount can be an advantage for yourself as well as your customer. If you have room on your truck for one more unit, the cost of delivering two units is about the same as one, so you can offer a discount (perhaps 10% per unit) and still come out ahead.

As you can also see from the above samples, the prices are different for construction rentals. A long-term commitment is steady cash flow from a regular customer, so monthly rentals reflect this ongoing relationship.

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GIVE CUSTOMERS AN SAP SCORE

Once you have an established business, use "SAP scoring" to help you decide the value of each account. Give your customers a score based on these three factors:

- Safety
- Accessibility
- Payment history

Safety

Give a lower score for persistent safety issues. For example, if you have to back out into traffic or make difficult maneuvers to service units, or if rough terrain could cause damage to your truck.

Accessibility

"Easy in, easy out" earns a high score. Customers get a lower score for consistently delaying your scheduled servicing. Major accessibility issues include units that are blocked by vehicles or heavy equipment, locked gates or other reasons you can't access the site and when rain or snow make it harder to access a site.

Payment history

Give a low score if the account has a history of slow payments or if you must always call to remind the customer to pay.

Use the SAP score to help you decide if an account is a "keeper," if the account needs a price increase or even if you should drop the account. You may find that some customers aren't worth the trouble.

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BILLING YOUR CUSTOMERS

For special events and weekend rentals, plan on asking for payment in full before delivery. If you don't collect upfront, especially from a one-time user, you have no leverage to collect payment once the event is over. Over time, you may be able to make exceptions for repeat customers.

Our experts in construction advise that most long-term rentals are usually advance billed in four-week cycles (billed for the next four weeks). Some companies will ask to be billed for the previous month. Although we say one month, it really makes financial sense to actually bill every 28 days. The extra days add up to where you can bill 13 times in the year instead of 12.

Too many things can change on the job to charge for longer periods. Often, the project schedule may change, or more units might be needed. You can invoice the "extra occurrences" as they happen. Your flexibility in meeting their needs will be appreciated.

TAX OR NO TAX?

One of the most unusual issues of the portable sanitation business is state sales tax. Some states consider renting a toilet as a service and do not require tax. Others consider the transaction as rental of tangible personal property that is taxable. Sometimes,



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it's both!

Contact the department of revenue in the state or states where your business is located for specific answers. Also, check with the cities where you do business for municipal tax information.

When you are required to charge state sales tax, itemize it on your bill. You may consider providing information on sales tax in your service agreement.

3. Special Events

Good Preparation Sets the Pace

3. Special Events

Good Preparation Sets the Pace

The portable sanitation busy season is full of special events, from children's birthday parties to huge public festivals. Your service helps make special events special.

For most owner-operators, special events are a major part of their income, and you will often hear how profitable they are. But don't take special events for granted. You have to plan well and work smart to make them pay off.

Look for Opportunities

To begin getting special event customers, our advice is to ask local customer groups about their need for portable sanitation, especially:

- Event planners
- Party rental businesses
- Local organizations and non-profit groups
- Wedding venues and wedding shows
- Running associations

Check your local newspaper events calendar, Facebook events or local travel guides to see what's happening in your area. Special events are planned well in advance, so you must market your business early in the year to secure their business.

When you enter the special events market, you'll need to stock your



3. Special Events

Good Preparation Sets the Pace

inventory with some higher-end units and amenities. Many special event planners are looking for add-ons such as ADA units, sinks and flush restrooms. These units and accessories provide a more “upscale” look and experience and can be a great way to increase your marketability (and revenue) at events.

Start small. After you've gained experience servicing personal special events, such as weddings, graduations, family reunions and quinceañeras, you can target larger, public events. Market your special event units to small towns, social clubs, church groups or party planners. As you develop experience with this market, ask customers for testimonials. Your business will grow by word of mouth.

Professionals suggest five questions you should ask an event planner so you will know the right support to provide. They also demonstrate your preparedness and professionalism.

1. Have you rented portable sanitation before?

If the answer is yes, there's a good chance he or she is a dissatisfied customer who wants to do business with someone new. If the answer is no, pricing might not be a factor since he or she has nothing to compare your prices to. The sale is yours to close.

2. Will the event have permanent facilities on site?

People tend to wait in line a lot longer to use a permanent facility. If portables are the only option, you'll need to make sure enough units are placed to cover the demand. Ask what the customer considers an acceptable queue (wait line) for each unit.

3. Will alcohol be served at the event?

Research shows that when alcohol is served, the use of portables increases by 35 percent. If an event involves alcohol

3. Special Events

Good Preparation Sets the Pace

consumption, make sure your customer understands the need to have additional restrooms.

4. Is the event ticketed? If yes, how much is the cost of a ticket?

If an event planner is inexperienced or is trying to cut corners, too few units will hurt an event and make your service look bad. The answers to these questions will give you numbers that will help you educate customers and possibly sell a few more portables. Use this equation:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{NUMBER OF GUESTS} \times \text{TICKET PRICE} &= \text{GROSS GATE RECEIPT} \\ \text{GROSS GATE RECEIPT} \div \text{TOTAL RESTROOM SERVICE COST} &= \text{COST OF SANITATION PER GUEST} \end{aligned}$$

The cost of sanitation per guest is usually extremely low, which you can point out to your customer. For a little more money, a customer can get a lot more convenience.

5. Are restrooms needed in parking areas?

Capture that first use in the parking lot. When the only option is located inside the gate, it can get crowded. Parking lot portables help with crowd control, giving guests options before and after an event.



Calculating Number of Units Needed

All events are different, but to get a dependable baseline for the number of restrooms you will need to provide, you can use the following restroom and sink calculator for special events from PolyJohn. There are many others available on the internet.

www.polyjohn.com/assets/1/31/Special_Events_Restroom-Sink-Estimator.pdf

Please note, these are not the same numbers as OSHA requirements for worksites.

Scheduling Services

The weekend is crunch time for special events. When you have several one-day and multi-day events scheduled on the same weekend, you will be delivering units, cleaning units and taking down units from Friday through Monday. Being prepared will help you make wise decisions quickly, and that could be the difference between making money and losing money.

If you have the capabilities, run your normal routes on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, giving you more flexibility on Friday and Monday for event deliveries and pickups. As mentioned in an earlier section, you may want to offer customers a discount if they can accept a special event delivery early (like a Thursday), while you are servicing your regular route. It can give you more breathing room on the weekend.



3. Special Events

Good Preparation Sets the Pace

Maximize the capacity of your truck. Group your deliveries based on location. Add a charge if last-minute add-ons are going to cause an extra trip or if you have to travel out of your way. You can't always deliver at a specific time, but do your best. Or, offer to call the client/customer 1 hour prior to delivery.

Some events are extremely well-organized; some are just the opposite. Work closely with the planner in charge of arranging portable sanitation, but always be alert and proactive.

Get as much information as you can about:

- Specific delivery time
- Additional instructions
- Contact person when delivering units

Respond to any issue that will affect the quality of your service. For example, some event planners will try to save money by reducing the number of units. Discourage cutbacks that will reflect badly on you and the event itself.

Scope out an event beforehand. Check that heavy equipment, stage scaffolding, trucks, tents or other vendors aren't blocking your service routes. Get a map or site layout for reference. We know some pros who print a satellite view (via Google Earth) of the site to plot out where their units go — and file the map for the following year.

If the event lasts more than one day, recommend to the event coordinator that the units need to be cleaned at least once a day (sometimes more). Don't forget to add those service charges to your proposal. Events often run longer into the evening than scheduled, so you might find it easier to clean the units in the early morning (4:00 to 7:00 a.m.). Traffic will be lighter, too.

3. Special Events

Good Preparation Sets the Pace

If you have to deliver or clean a unit during the event, be patient and friendly. Factor slow driving into your service time. When crowds realize that your job at the event is portable sanitation, they are usually happy to give you the right-of-way. They appreciate good service, too!

After the Event

For future reference, review what went right and what could be improved, and share the information with the event's organizers. Finally, do a cost breakdown so you can determine if the event was profitable and if you need to fine-tune future bids. Don't forget to include the cost of building up your business to handle your special event workload.

4. Human Resources

From Owner to Employer

4. Human Resources

From Owner to Employer

Hiring your first employee is a milestone in your business. It's also a big responsibility to be "the boss." It's not only an investment of time and money, it's an investment in your company image. Your employee(s) will be representing your company. Everything they do will be the same as if you did it yourself.

How to Find and Keep Good Employees

A dependable employee is truly a human "resource." They give you more capabilities to expand your business and give you more options in the way you run your business. Working with employees will also help you grow as a business person, expanding your managerial skills and experience.

As you begin what we hope will be a career-long experience in hiring, use the help and expert advice of your business mentor, as well as SCORE, Small Business Development Centers, Women's Business Centers and Office of Veterans Business Development.

FIRST, DO THE MATH

Employees cost money. Before you begin the hiring process, make a realistic estimate of the costs and decide if you can afford an employee. Here are the most significant costs, according to the SBA:

- Wages
- Unemployment tax — Check with your state department of revenue for your state unemployment tax rate. Federal unemployment tax is 0.8 percent on the employee's first \$7,000 of earnings.

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- Workers compensation insurance — Check with your state for the state rate.
- Medicare and Social Security taxes — Currently, Social Security tax is 6.2 percent on wages up to \$113,700. Medicare tax is another 1.45 percent.
- Recruitment and training costs — Consider the time you spend interviewing candidates, cost of placing ads, etc.
- Benefits — If you plan to offer benefits, factor those into your calculations.
- Payroll costs — It takes time and money to do payroll and calculate taxes and withholding. Consider the cost of investing in payroll software.
- New equipment — A second pumper truck, additional units, accessories, fuel and maintenance costs, uniforms, etc.
- Insurance for company vehicles

Compare the estimated annual cost of an employee to the extra income you could earn. You will be spending money on hiring and employing before your new employee will be increasing your cash flow. Can you afford to live with less profit until your business catches up?

REVIEW THE WORK

Once you're ready to begin the hiring process, put yourself in the place of someone looking for work. You will see that there are advantages and disadvantages to portable sanitation.

Job seekers may regard portable sanitation as undesirable because the job involves cleaning human waste. It's also a physical job that requires being outside in all kinds of weather, working weekends and long hours.

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Portable sanitation can also be exactly the type of work a job seeker is looking for. Physical, outdoor work may be a positive reason to take the job. Portable sanitation also offers the independence of doing a job with little supervision and the opportunity to meet all sorts of people. Portable sanitation workers have the satisfaction of providing an important service, and they help keep our world cleaner and more sanitary.

PUTTING THE WORD OUT

Advertise in local newspapers, Craigslist and professional websites such as [Indeed.com](#), [Monster.com](#), [Glassdoor.com](#), [Careerbuilder.com](#) and [Simplyhired.com](#).

Here's a sample ad:

XYZ company is growing, and we're searching for a portable sanitation service technician. As a service tech, part of your job will be driving a company vehicle. We pride ourselves on hiring a driver with an outstanding record to ensure equipment is properly cared for. The job also requires physical labor and attention to detail. If you are someone who enjoys working hard outdoors, working mostly independently and "sweating the details," then this is the job for you! Occasional customer interaction is expected, so XYZ will provide the uniform! Driving experience is preferred, but we will train the right candidate. Minimum of a chauffeur license required — CDL B (with tanker endorsement preferred). Candidates must be able to obtain a DOT Medical Card. Apply today!

Do you know friends or acquaintances who might be interested? Network by putting out the word to your business and construction contacts. (Once you have employees, they can also be good sources of new hires. You might consider a referral program that gives employees a reward for bringing in a new hire.)

Put together a job application form that you can email or send to applicants. (There are generic forms available on the internet that you can edit to your needs.)

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THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

Review the applications for candidates who stand out. You can begin the interview process over the phone.

You may want to include the following questions in the application and/or phone interview:

- Work history
- Reasons for leaving previous job
- Starting and ending pay
- Years of commercial driving experience
- Types of vehicles driven
- Tickets/accidents/driving record for the last 5 years
- DOB (you are allowed to ask this for a commercial driving job)
- Current/active DOT physical (if not, do they have a problem obtaining it?)
- Drug and alcohol test (if required by your insurance)
- Highest level of education received
- Can you read a map?
- Can you use a GPS?
- How long have you lived in the service area?
- Are you familiar with the service area?
- Can you do repetitive tasks and lift 50 lbs. regularly in all weather conditions?
- Have you ever hauled a trailer before (or pulled a boat, camper, etc.)?
- Criminal record for last 7 years (not required to document anything that has been expunged)
- References

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Ask the same question in different ways. Do the answers change?

On-site interview

Invite your top candidates for an on-site interview. Here, you can discover additional indicators about their qualifications. Did they arrive on time? Did they call and ask for directions?

Answer any questions they may have. Explain the realities of the schedule, such as working weekends in the summer. Explain that emergencies happen and the workload is often unpredictable.

Get a feel for their personality and workplace behavior by asking questions in person, such as:

- How many days did you miss work at your last job? What were the reasons?
- Why will we be able to rely on you every day?
- If needed, can you work longer than originally scheduled?
- At your last job, what did you do if you had a problem getting along with someone?

Give the candidates a tour of your site. (Tip: Make a point to walk fast. Do they keep up?)

Show your candidate how to load, unload and clean a unit, and have them try it. (Let them know ahead of time so they can dress casually.) Explain the steps you take. Can they follow and understand direction?

Have the candidate drive the truck in the yard. Did he or she use caution starting and moving the truck for the first time? Adjust the

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seat and mirrors? Use the seatbelt? How well does he or she maneuver and back up? Set the parking brake when finished?

HIRING AND ONBOARDING

Don't expect immediate success. Every time you hire, you'll recruit many candidates before you find the right person. But when you do, welcome your new employee, and have a plan to help them get up to speed. We call it the onboarding process.

Start your new employee on Monday. For the first week (or however long you decide), accompany your new hire. Have them do the work while you supervise.

Emphasize to your employee that the job is more than cleaning toilets. It's cleaning well, driving safely, being knowledgeable, communicating well, following instructions, being polite and friendly and looking for new opportunities. Show them the professionalism you expect by conducting yourself professionally.

When you hire more employees, you can have your more experienced employees train the beginners.

DO THE PAPERWORK

Hiring an employee means you must also meet certain federal and state regulations.

Read the SBA article "Hire Your First Employee" at

www.sba.gov/starting-business/hire-retain-employees/hire-your-first-employee.

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Here is a review of your major requirements when you hire:

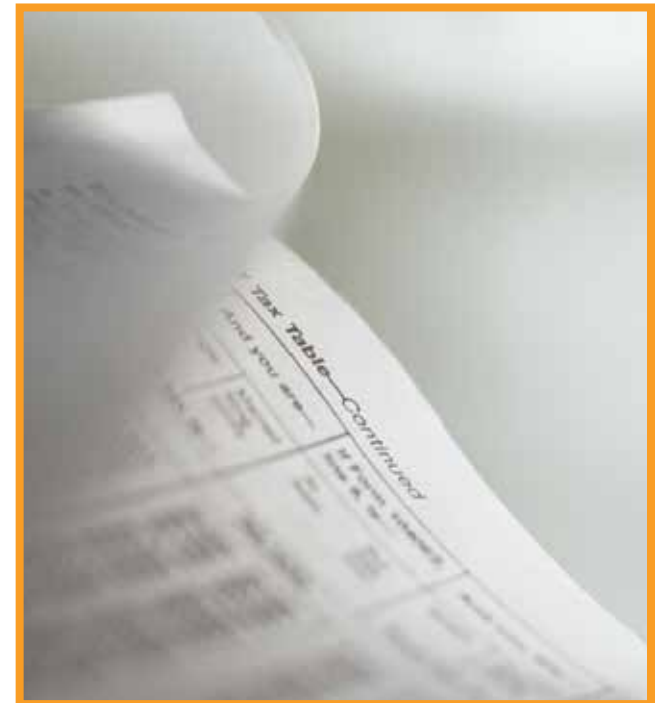
Step 1. Obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN)

You need to get an employment identification number (EIN) from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. The EIN is also called an Employer Tax ID or Form SS-4. The EIN is necessary for reporting taxes and other documents to the IRS and to report information about your employees to state agencies. Apply for EIN online or contact the IRS at 1-800-829-4933.

Step 2. Set up records for withholding taxes

You must keep records of employment taxes for at least four years. The three types of withholding taxes are:

- Federal Income Tax Withholding — Every employee must provide an employer with a signed withholding exemption certificate (Form W-4). The employer must then submit Form W-4 to the IRS.
- Federal Wage and Tax Statement — Every year, employers must report to the federal government wages paid and taxes withheld for each employee. This report is filed using Form W-2.
- State Taxes — You may be required to withhold state income taxes. Visit your state and local tax page for more information.



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Step 3. Employee eligibility verification

Federal law requires employers to verify an employee's eligibility to work in the United States. Within three days of hire, employers must complete Form I-9, which requires employers to examine documents to confirm the employee's citizenship or eligibility to work in the U.S.

Step 4. Register with your state's new hire reporting program

All employers are required to report newly hired employees to a state directory within 20 days of their hire date. Visit your state's New Hires Reporting Requirements page to learn more.

Step 5. Obtain workers' compensation insurance

All businesses with employees are required to carry Workers' Compensation Insurance through a commercial carrier on a self-insured basis or through their state's Workers' Compensation Insurance program.

Step 6. Post required notices

Employers are required to display certain posters in the workplace that inform employees of their rights and employer responsibilities under labor laws. Visit the Workplace Posters page for specific federal and state posters you'll need for your business.

Step 7. File your taxes

Generally, employers who pay wages subject to income tax withholding — Social Security and Medicare taxes — must file IRS Form 941, Employer's Quarterly Federal Tax Return. Visit the state and local tax page for specific tax filing requirements for employers.

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Step 8. Set up additional recordkeeping

Certain federal employment laws also require you to keep records about your employees. The following sites provide more information about federal reporting requirements:

Labor Recordkeeping Requirements: www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/recordkeeping

Occupational Safety and Health Act Compliance: www.osha.gov/dcsp/compliance_assistance/quickstarts/index.html

Employment Law Guide: www.dol.gov/compliance/guide/erisa.htm

POST-HIRE REVIEW

At the end of a set period of time (30 or 60 days for example), meet with your employee for a performance review. Give a realistic assessment of how he or she has been performing. Tell your employee the specific reasons why he or she is doing well, and offer suggestions for improvement in areas where the performance isn't up to your standards. Give them the opportunity to bring up any concerns, questions or issues they may have. Give them goals or performance targets for the next review.

You may have hired your employee as a seasonal worker. You may choose to make them full-time at that point. Or, if the employee's work is unsatisfactory or the employee is dissatisfied with the job, this is an appropriate time to end the relationship.

With the hiring of your first employee, you should begin to put together an employee manual that states rules of behavior and what is expected of employees. For an introduction, read the SBA article "Employee Handbooks" at www.sba.gov/starting-business/hire-retain-employees/employee-handbooks.

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If you are having a difficult time hiring or keeping good employees, ask them why they decided to quit. Is it the schedule, conditions, equipment, compensation or wages? Look for causes you can change. Discuss with your business mentor or the professionals at SCORE, Small Business Development Centers and Women's Business Centers.

Safety Training and Accident Prevention

In portable sanitation, safety is a priority of the highest level for you and every one of your employees. When you're working outdoors in all seasons and weather conditions, lifting and moving equipment, driving and maneuvering a truck and trailer, using a vacuum system and applying chemical solutions, there is always the possibility of an accident. And a single accident can have a major impact on your business.



Safety is the law. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), employers must provide a workplace free from recognized hazards that cause, or are likely to cause, death or serious physical harm to employees.

OSHA reminds us that safety is also good business and is essential to profitability. It pays off in lower costs and increased productivity. Your employees will have better morale, and your customers will recognize your efforts as the mark of a truly professional operation.

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The key is to do more than what is simply required. Take safety to the “next level.” Make every day an opportunity to practice safety. Always put a positive spin on the need for safety. Make safety part of your workplace culture.

START WITH OSHA

For an overall understanding of what you must do to create a safe workplace, visit the OSHA website at www.osha.gov. It's a prime source of information. For an owner-operator who is hiring his or her first employee, these pages are especially helpful:

- The OSHA Quick Start page (www.osha.gov/dcsp/compliance_assistance/quickstarts/index.html) will help you identify many OSHA requirements that may apply to your workplace.
- Some states have their own OSHA-approved job safety and health programs. To see if your state has its own plan, go to www.osha.gov/dcsp/osp/index.html.
- To request a free, onsite OSHA consultation, www.osha.gov/dcsp/smallbusiness/consult.html.
- For a selection of OSHA training courses and educational programs, go to www.osha.gov/dte/index.html.

OSHA is working closely with the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) Small Business Development Centers program to provide information on OSHA and its many programs available to small business owners. There is at least one center in every state — a total of 1000 nationwide — that provides services to small businesses. For a center near you, visit SBA's website at www.sba.gov.

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YOUR SAFETY ROUTINE

Safety is daily. Safety is serious. Safety takes effort. Make sure your employees understand that you want them to be safe at work and to think about what they are doing at all times. Everyone's frame of mind should at all times be in "safety mode."

Create your own safety plan, and get buy-in from all employees to commit to it. Encourage your employees to make suggestions for the plan and to report workplace hazards.

Your safety and health program should consist of five parts:

1. Management leadership and employee participation
2. Workplace analysis
3. Hazard prevention and control
4. Safety and health training and education
5. Program evaluation



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There are many ways to make safety a habit. Some common ideas that you should include:

Monthly safety meetings

OSHA recommends monthly safety meetings. They don't have to be too long — about 20 to 30 minutes. Discuss safety subjects that are relevant to your situation or work environment, such as:

- A review of recent accidents (or near accidents), and how to prevent similar events from occurring
- Issues that come up because of insurance or legal issues
- Safety goals or programs that you have created specifically for your business
- Other basic safety topics

Safety huddles

A brief daily meeting at the beginning of each work day to review safety. OSHA offers short, pre-written meetings called Toolbox Talks designed to increase employee awareness of safety. For a list of free Toolbox Talks topics, go to www.oshatraining.com/Toolbox-Talks.php. A new topic is published every month.

Signage around your facility

OSHA specifications for safety signs, accident prevention signs and safety tags are spelled out in 29 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 1910.145 at www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=STANDARDS&p_id=9794.

Pre-trip inspections

You may want to create a checklist for your employees to run through and sign off on before they hit the road. A pre-trip/post-trip inspection is a DOT requirement and is a great opportunity to check oil, supplies, vacuum pressure, etc. If there are problems, writing them down usually helps keep track of the issues and leads to less downtime.

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Safety messages

Post safety reminders in the cabs, on garage doors or on daily paperwork. Ask your driver in the morning for one item they are focusing on doing safely today. Check in with drivers regarding safety topics throughout the day.

Safety rewards

Offer a bonus like a pizza lunch, gift card or a cash reward for safety achievements such as consecutive accident-free days.

GENERAL SAFETY

Some general safety tips for portable sanitation workers:

- Wear gloves
- Follow SDS instructions for chemicals
- Wear safety toe or steel toe boots
- Wear pants, not shorts
- Wear high-visibility clothing and attire
- Wear a hard hat
- Wear safety glasses while handling chemicals and pumping
- Use phone awareness; don't talk or text while driving

You, as the owner-operator, and your employees should team up to:

- Maintain a clean and obstacle-free yard, garage and storage facility
- Maintain all vehicles and equipment in proper working order



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SAFETY WITH PORTABLE SANITATION EQUIPMENT

Many injuries in the portable sanitation business are the result of improper or careless loading and unloading of units, wrapping up hoses and strapping the units.

- If the unit starts to fall while loading, let it fall. Your instinct will be to prevent it from falling, but you could injure yourself (shoulder injuries are common), and that's far worse than a damaged unit.
- While using straps, don't stretch or reach out. Instead, move around the truck and units to get in a good position to tighten the straps. Reaching and stretching could cause you to lose your footing or could add extra stress to your shoulders.
- If you're considering purchasing a new truck, opt for one with a lower work station, which is more ergonomically designed. You don't have to reach up to wrap hoses, for example.

SAFETY ON SITE

Stay alert when maneuvering your truck on construction sites and busy event venues. Things change quickly. Trucks and equipment are moving about, and people may be distracted when so much is going on.

Be especially vigilant when backing up. In the time it takes to clean the unit, a truck may have backed in or a group of people may have gathered right behind you. When in doubt, ask someone on-site to "spot" you while in a tight area or backing up blindly.

When servicing a unit during an event, drive slowly, at a crawl if necessary. Anticipate longer transportation times when planning your work schedule.

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You are in a constant competition for customers. You want to win as often as possible! Sales and marketing serve as your action plan to target customers, challenge competitors and give yourself every advantage.

The key to successful sales and marketing is how you run your operation. Sales and marketing are most effective when you back them up with high-quality, dependable service.

How to Bid on Contracts

Federal, state and municipal governments contract for portable sanitation services provided by private businesses like yours. The contracts may range in size from just a few units to hundreds of units. Some common uses are government-sponsored events, seasonal use in parks, preserves and beaches and planned construction or repair that will restrict indoor sanitation.

Most often, they are legally required to put these contracts up for bid and usually need at least three bidders. The bidding process is a good opportunity for a growing company like yours to win business. The major advantages are:

- You are working with an extremely reliable customer
- The job closely matches your capabilities and resources
- It adds a level of professionalism to your business for other clients to know that you handle government contracts
- It gives you financial security knowing in advance that income will be coming in on a steady basis throughout the length of the contract.



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Even your “one man, one truck” business can bid on contracts if you are confident you have the ability to handle the job. Go into the process with the attitude that a contract is beneficial to both you and your customer. Prepare yourself for the process and the work ahead:

- Contracts tie up your resources for extended periods, so bid on what you can realistically handle.
- Don't bid below your costs. Bid on what it takes to deliver your best service.
- There is usually a fair amount of “red tape” to deal with. Follow the bid requirements closely.
- Understand that governments sometimes have funding issues, so the work may not pay as well as private customers.
- What are governments looking for through contracts? They want services to be on “automatic pilot.” They want to have great portable sanitation service throughout the length of the contract without having to constantly monitor you.
- When you win a contract, be a great partner. Don't lose the contract because you took it for granted.

FEDERAL CONTRACTS

To begin bidding on government proposals, you must first certify your company as a “small business” and obtain appropriate registrations. Learn about registering for government contracting at www.sba.gov/contracting/getting-started-contractor/register-government-contracting. The information on this site covers the following registration steps in more detail:

1. Obtain a D-U-N-S Number

Get a free Dun & Bradstreet D-U-N-S® Number for each physical location of



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your business.

2. Register with the System of Award Management (SAM)

SAM is the primary database of vendors doing business with the federal government. SAM allows government agencies and contractors to search for your company based on your ability, size, location, experience, ownership and more.

3. Find the NAICS Codes for Your Company

You may need a North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code for administrative, contracting and tax purposes.

4. Obtain Past Performance Evaluations

An Open Ratings Past Performance Evaluation is a rating based on an independent audit of customer references and various performance information.

Some of the items that you will need in order to complete registration processes:

- NAICS codes
- Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS)
- Federal Tax Identification Number (TIN or EIN)
- Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes
- Product Service codes (optional but useful)
- Federal Supply Classification codes (optional but useful)

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FEDERAL RESOURCES

There are many resources available to research the marketplace for federal contracting opportunities. For a description of top resources, go to the Small Business Administration page "Contracting Resources for Small Businesses" at www.sba.gov/contracting/finding-government-customers/contracting-resources-small-businesses.

Resources include:

Dynamic Small Business Search

The SBA maintains the Dynamic Small Business Search (DSBS) database. DSBS is a tool contracting officers use to identify potential small business contractors for upcoming contracting opportunities.

FedBizOpps: Federal Business Opportunities

Federal business opportunities for all contracts valued over \$25,000 are listed at FedBizOpps: Federal Business Opportunities.

GSA Schedules

The largest government-wide contracts are established by the U.S. General Services Administration under its GSA Schedules Program. State and local governments also use the GSA schedules for purchasing goods and services, so becoming a GSA schedule contractor can be beneficial at all levels of government.

Federal Procurement Data System

The repository of all federal contracting data for contracts in excess of \$25,000. Information includes:

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- Which agencies have contracts and with whom
- What agencies buy
- Which contractors have contracts

USASpending.Gov

A searchable database of information about government spending through contracts awarded by the federal government.

OSDBU.Gov

Many federal agencies have what is known as an Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) or an Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP). These offices identify opportunities to use small businesses as vendors.

www.osdbu.gov.

STATE AND MUNICIPAL CONTRACTS

Check your state's official website for contracts up for bid, as well as the specifics needed to meet the requirements of the bid.

Many cities, especially larger cities, also provide information on contracts through their official website. Some city sites



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may also have a listing of special events that have been granted permits. For these events, a detailed site will offer important details such as the number of toilets and sinks needed and the vendor(s) providing the services. If the portable sanitation vendor is listed as TBD (to be determined) or TBA (to be announced), it may be an opportunity for you. Even if the site lists only the events, it is still valuable information that you can follow up on.

Rental Operation Contracts

Private companies, such as construction companies, aren't required to accept bids. Sometimes, companies will have long-term service agreements, which are submitted to the customer by the vendor.

A service agreement is basically a contract between you and your customer that describes the terms and conditions for the use of your professional services. It's the foundation of a solid business relationship because it protects you and your customer equally. It covers your responsibilities as the "lessor" and your customer's responsibilities as the "lessee."

As with government entities, a one, two or three-year agreement offers mutual benefits. It gives you a steady cash flow, while private companies are looking for the same service as governments — they want it to be as regular as clockwork so they don't have to worry about it.

In your sales and marketing efforts, you will encounter companies that seem to be a good opportunity for business but have a contract with another vendor. Ask them if they have any issues with their current provider (condition of the toilets, attitude of the drivers, delivery problems, etc.). Even a minor problem gives you an opportunity to make a solid sales pitch on why your services

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are better.

Offer to make a bid when the current agreement comes to a close. Again, promise only what you can deliver, and be fair and honest. There's no sense in bidding under your costs.

When you have an agreement, exceed your customer's expectations. Make yourself invaluable so the customer doesn't even consider looking for other bids. Your best customers are the ones who love the service you provide, don't compare your rates to your competition and will accept a minor cost increase when you renew the agreement.

Promoting Your Portable Sanitation Business

Marketing is connecting with your potential customers through a process of awareness, education and invitation. The goal is to get your potential customers to:

- Know who you are (awareness)
- Know what you do (education)
- Know why they should hire you instead of another portable sanitation company (invitation)

Marketing shouldn't be random. The pros recommend that to really take advantage of the power of marketing to keep your phone ringing, you should create a yearly marketing plan and spend 10 percent of your revenue per year on marketing.

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There are many, many ways to market your business. The key is finding the right combination of tactics. When starting from scratch, the basic elements of marketing that should be part of your plan are:

- Your branding: company name, logo and tagline
- Your advertising: units, vehicle signage, business cards, ads, mailings, email, social media, etc.
- Your website

YOUR BRANDING

Who doesn't know famous brands like McDonald's, Apple, Ford, Walmart and Nike?

Just like them, your company has a brand. Your brand is what you do and the way you do it. It's your image. "Branding" is telling your customers about yourself.

The two most necessary parts of your brand that the public will see are your company name and your logo. They should make an impression.



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Company Name

Branding begins with the name of your company. The name you choose is important. It will represent you for a long time, so think carefully!

Look on the web for examples. You'll see that many companies take a similar approach. The most popular company names may include the owner's name (Pat's Portables, Singleton's Sanitation Service), a service quality that you want to emphasize (quick, reliable, comfortable, clean, spotless), the area you are serving (Lewisville Porta-johns, Northern Idaho Sanitation) or even a humorous reference to using the bathroom (see below). A bit of imagination can make your name stand out. Ask your family, friends and business mentor for their opinions.

Names of actual portable toilet companies:

- Happy Can Portable Toilets
- Best Seat In The House
- ASAP Port-A-Pots
- Johnny On The Spot
- Royal Throne
- Tanks Alot
- Oui Oui Enterprises
- Willy Make It?
- Doodie Calls
- A King's Throne



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Company Logo

A logo is a symbol or design that identifies the company and appears on its products.

Here are logo examples of local portable sanitation businesses like yours:

Do you see the three most important parts of the logo in each example? They are the company name, phone number and web address. Make sure your logo contains all three.



Unless you are a professional artist, we don't recommend trying to design your own logo, business cards, signs or other branding. A professional graphic artist or graphics company will be able to turn your ideas into a clear, sharp design. Contact your local Chamber of Commerce to find the help you will need. Some online printing companies also offer economical logo design.

The first example above also has a tagline ("Ahead with class"). A tagline is a slogan or a very short description of your business. If you want to create a tagline for your business, keep it short and memorable. Keep in mind some of the most famous taglines, such as "Just Do It," "BMW: The Ultimate Driving Machine" and "The Few. The Proud. The Marines."

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YOUR ADVERTISING

Advertising is something you do all the time in different ways. Ads and other marketing materials are meant to be seen by the public (your potential customers) to create awareness about your business. Awareness is how business relationships begin.

Advertising can be as simple as an ad, business cards, stickers on your porta-johns and signs on your truck. When you put all of the parts together, it has a "snowball" effect — the longer and more often you use advertising and marketing, the more familiar you become to your audience.

As we look at some of the most important and effective advertising and marketing tools, you will also be thinking about where to get your advertising done.

Whatever kinds of advertising you choose, you have many options to have the work done with your budget in mind. The graphic artist that designed your logo can also help you design ads. Your local office supply store or online printing companies can produce most of the printed needs, such as business cards, decals and brochures. Your Chamber of Commerce will help you find local companies for larger or more complex marketing needs, such as business signs and vehicle graphics. You will also find online companies that offer these services. Ask the companies you work with if they offer a small business startup package. Shop around!



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YOUR UNITS

Your portable sanitation business has one of the best advantages in advertising — the units themselves. Every unit should have a decal or sticker with your logo prominently displayed. It's free advertising at every site in your service area! Look on the internet for companies in the industry that specialize in portable toilet decals. In addition, the colors of your units can reinforce your brand and differentiate your company from the competition.



YOUR VEHICLES

Your logo on your truck and other vehicles is like a portable billboard that travels throughout your service area. The advertising on your vehicle becomes more effective when people see it on a regular basis, because they will realize your company is a steady, reliable performer.

Owner-operators like to get creative with the graphics on their vehicles. One business had a big sign on the trailer all summer that

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said, "We're going to a Party." It was definitely noticed, and he heard comments from hundreds of people!

BUSINESS CARDS

The benefit of business cards is that they are personal. Your business card is like a handshake or a face-to-face meeting. Even in the world of smartphones, they can make a difference in winning and keeping customers. The key to using business cards is to give them out as often as possible. Always have them on hand — it shows that you are prepared. When you send a bill or a letter as part of your business, include a card.

You may also want business envelopes and stationery with your logo to match your business cards.

ADS

You should have a basic ad that you can place in the Yellow Pages (and online Yellow Pages), construction newsletters, real estate guides, Chamber of Commerce newsletters and "Services for Hire" classifieds.

The most effective ads can be very simple. Along with your logo (name, phone, website), you can list your services and advantages, perhaps add a photo. You can create a slightly different ad to target a specific audience, like the construction market or event and wedding planners.

When placing ads, think ahead. For example, special event planners might start reserving portable sanitation units eight months or so in advance of their busy season.

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MAILINGS AND EMAILS

When you mail some marketing information to a current or potential customer, it is called direct mail marketing or advertising. Today, direct mail also includes email. It's another helpful resource to maintain a line of communication with your market.

As your business grows, you should create a mailing list of every customer you serve or have served, or every potential customer, and stay in touch with them on a regular basis. You can let them know, for example, that you have added to your service capabilities or are offering a special promotion. When you send any business-related email, you can add your logo to your "electronic signature."

You might even consider using an email marketing service such as Constant Contact, GetResponse or MailChimp.

SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

If you are web savvy, look into using social media sites for small business owners. You can create a company page on Facebook Business and LinkedIn, use YouTube for Business or get a free business listing on Google My Business.

You may not personally like social media, but it's very important in today's marketplace. It's one of the main tools for your company to get noticed by people searching the internet. Having a social media page does more than just let you post events, blogs and information to your customers. It can also help you get ranked higher by search engines .



5. Sales and Marketing

Winning Business

YOU!

You can be your own best advertising and marketing. Join your local Chamber of Commerce, service clubs and business organizations. Offer your services to charitable organizations.

There are many other marketing tools you can use, such as brochures, flyers and giveaways. Keep track of your marketing efforts and invest more in what works and less in what doesn't. Continue to experiment with new ideas. The most important question to ask a new customer is, "How did you hear about us?" Keep track of the answers, and see what paid off.

YOUR WEBSITE

Yes, you need a website!

Your website is 24/7 marketing for your business. When people see your company name on your truck or unit or see your ad, they will go to your website for more information. It shows customers that you are a reputable business with the services and equipment to do the job right — and the more a customer knows about you, the more you stand out from the competition in their minds. It will put you on the same level as other portable sanitation companies that have websites and give you an advantage over those that don't.

A simple website with perhaps two or three pages is all you need. It will provide basic information about your company, your services, your equipment and your contact information. You can provide a brief history and show photos. The second page could

5. Sales and Marketing

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focus on construction services, and the third could be for special events and parties.

It's easier than ever to create your own website. You don't need a lot of computer experience, and it doesn't cost a lot. It can make a big impact. It's well worth the time and money you put into it.

Before you start, check out some of your competitors' websites or any small portable sanitation company website for ideas.

If you feel comfortable with your computer skills, you can go to a build-it-yourself site such as Squarespace, Weebly or Wix. Otherwise, ask your Chamber of Commerce for local web designers.

Before you can start building your home on the web, you'll need a web address for it, which is called a domain name. For example, ours is www.johntalk.com. If your company name is Sam's Superior Sanitation, its address might be samssuperiorsanitation.com. Your designer or the build-it-yourself site you work with can help you register your domain name, or you can register it yourself on websites like GoDaddy.com. Site registration usually costs less than \$50 a year.

You'll also want to be able to make small changes to your website as your business grows. Ask your website designer to show you how to make minor changes, or else you will probably be charged whenever a change is needed.

Finally, your website should include a "call to action." This is a simple request to get your customer to act, such as "Call us today!" or "Call us first!" or "Contact us for more information on how we can serve you."

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