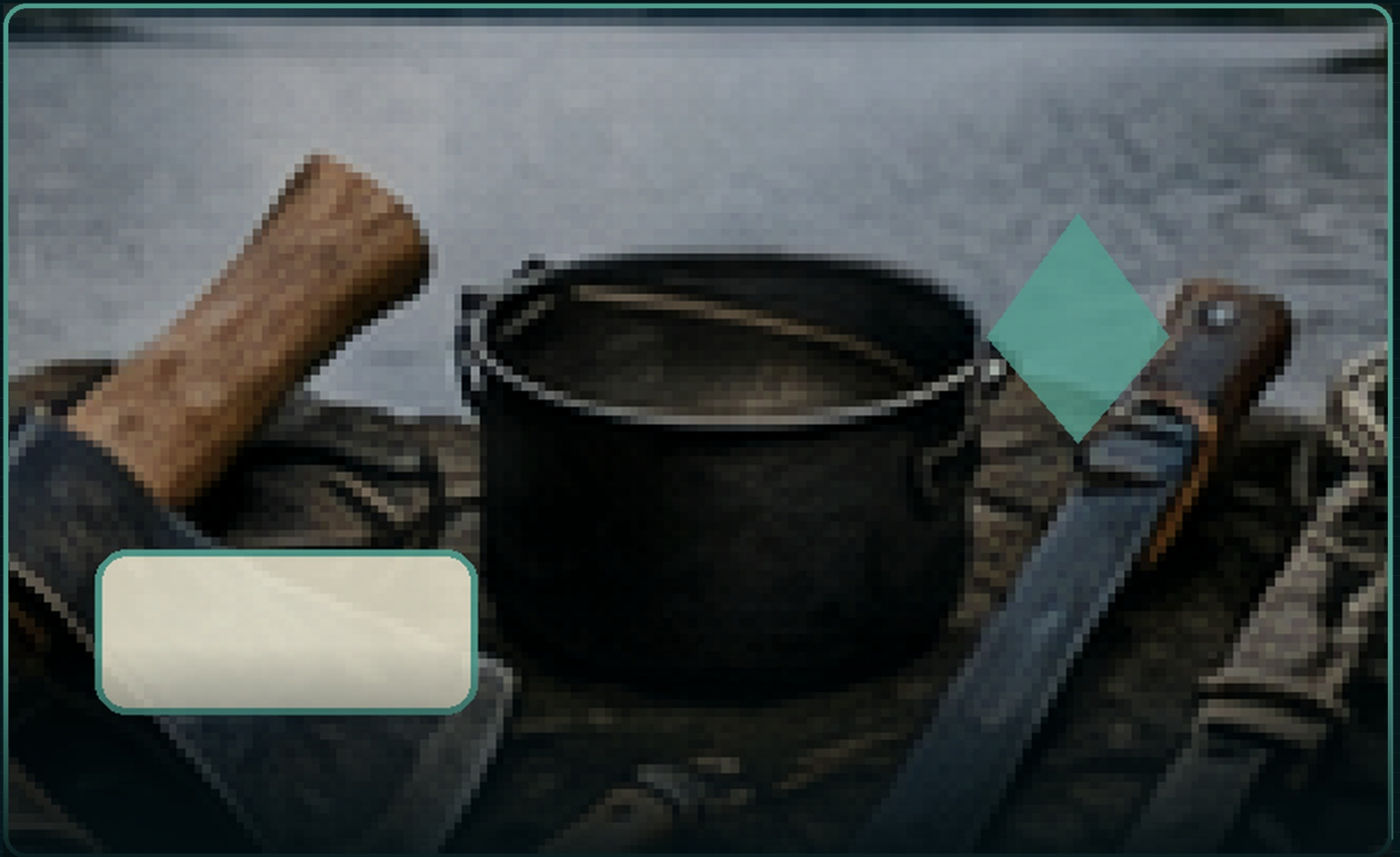


WILDERNESS SANITATION, HYGIENE & BODY CARE GUIDE

Stay clean enough to stay capable.

[WATER](#)[WASTE](#)[FEET](#)[HYGIENE](#)

KNOWLEDGE • SKILL • DISCIPLINE • SURVIVAL

Independent educational field guide • verify current laws, local conditions, and expert guidance

HYGIENE IS A PERFORMANCE SYSTEM

Clean hands, protected water, dry skin and disciplined waste zones preserve capability.

SEPARATE CLEAN FROM DIRTY

Design the camp so contamination must cross a visible boundary.

Long-duration hygiene is not cosmetic. It protects water, food, skin, feet, sleep, morale and the ability to keep working. The system must be simple enough to use when cold, tired and hungry.

1 CORE PRINCIPLES

- Separate raw water, treated water, food processing, handwashing, sleeping and waste activities.
- Wash hands at the moments that matter: after toileting, before food handling, after processing animals and after wound care.
- Keep treated-water containers, utensils and clean cloths from touching dirty surfaces or raw-water gear.
- Dry skin folds, feet, gloves, socks and bedding; moisture damage can become a mobility problem.
- Use local land-manager rules as the controlling standard for human waste and wastewater.

2 FIRST CAMP PRIORITIES

- Choose toilet and wastewater locations before urgency creates a bad one.
- Build a stable handwashing station that works without contaminating the water container.
- Create a clean drying line and a dirty holding area for wet or soiled items.
- Reserve one cloth or tool for food-contact cleaning and another for general camp dirt.
- Set a daily foot, skin, mouth and clothing inspection routine.

FIELD RULE

A hygiene system fails when the clean container, clean hand or clean utensil touches the dirty workflow. Make the boundary obvious.

WASTE & WASTEWATER

Local rules first; protect water and pack out what the place requires.

DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY

Plan the method before the need.

Requirements vary by environment, season and agency. Some places require pack-out systems. Never assume a cathole or greywater practice is allowed simply because it is common elsewhere.

SYSTEM	GENERAL STARTING POINT	DO NOT
Local rules	Check land-manager requirements, closures, fire restrictions and pack-out rules before the trip.	Apply a generic backcountry rule where the agency requires a different method.
Human waste, where catholes are allowed	Choose a discreet site at least 200 feet from water, trails and camp; dig 6-8 inches deep, cover and disguise.	Use shallow soil, flood zones, beaches, alpine rock, frozen ground or high-use sites without verifying rules.
Toilet paper and hygiene products	Pack out toilet paper, wipes and menstrual products unless specific local guidance says otherwise.	Burn or bury synthetic wipes, packaging or hygiene products.
Pack-out systems	Carry approved waste bags or containers where required or where digging is unsuitable.	Wait until the emergency to learn sealing, storage or disposal procedures.
Dish and wash water	Move at least 200 feet from water where guidance applies; use minimal biodegradable soap, strain food particles and scatter wastewater broadly.	Wash dishes, bodies or clothing directly in streams or lakes.
Animal-processing waste	Follow wildlife, fishing and land-manager rules; keep processing and storage away from sleep and water systems.	Leave concentrated remains beside camp, trails or public access points.

DISTANCE IS NOT THE ONLY CONTROL

Slope, soil depth, flood risk, wildlife, visitor use and the exact agency rule matter. A site can be 200 feet away and still drain directly into water.

CAMP HYGIENE WORKFLOW

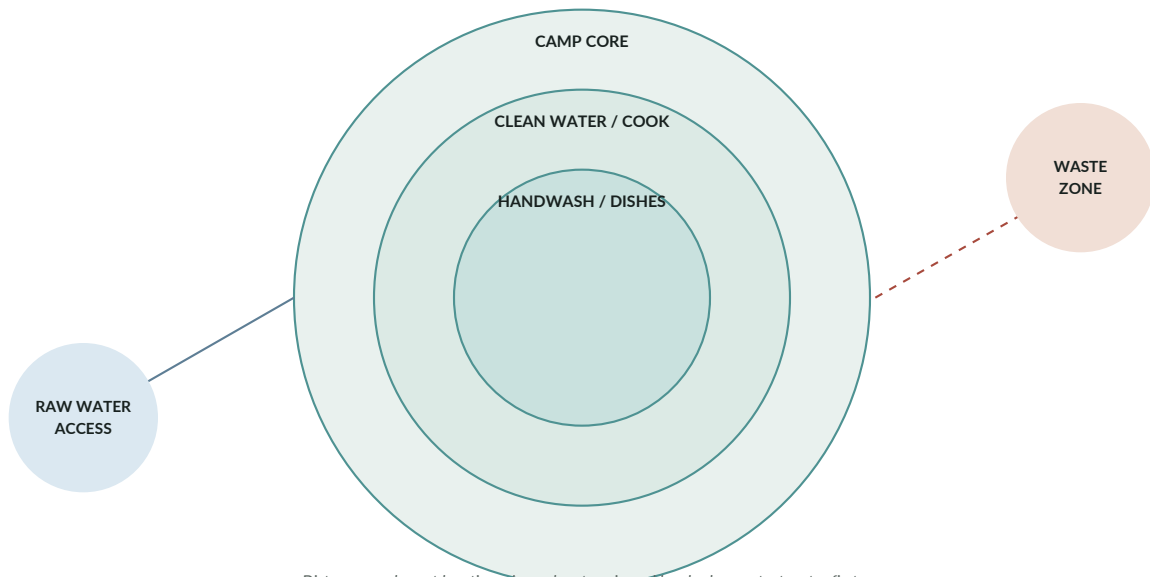
Move water and utensils through one direction: raw to treated to clean use.

DESIGN OUT CROSS-CONTAMINATION

The clean system should never backflow into the dirty system.

Use dedicated containers or unmistakable markings. Store raw-water tools separately, and do not dip dirty hands or vessels into treated-water storage.

SEPARATE THE SYSTEMS



1. COLLECT

Use the raw-water container and keep it outside the clean zone.

2. TREAT

Apply the chosen treatment correctly; allow required contact or cooling time.

3. STORE

Close the treated-water container and protect its spout or opening.

4. WASH HANDS

Use a controlled pour or spigot; avoid touching the outlet.

5. CLEAN DISHES

Scrape and strain food first; wash away from water according to local guidance.

6. DISPOSE

Scatter strained wastewater where allowed or use the required pack-out method.

ONE-WAY RULE

Raw-water hands and tools never touch the treated-water opening, clean cloth, eating utensil or wound-care kit. Reset the system immediately after any breach.

BODY CARE THAT PRESERVES MOBILITY

Small daily actions prevent large performance losses.

ADAPT BEFORE CONDITIONS FORCE IT

Inspect, clean, dry and protect

The schedule should be brief and repeatable. Pay special attention to feet, skin folds, hands, mouth and any area repeatedly exposed to friction or moisture.

1 FEET AND FOOTWEAR

- Inspect hot spots, blisters, cracks, swelling and numbness every day.
- Clean and dry feet; rotate socks and air footwear when conditions allow.
- Adjust lacing and friction points before pain changes gait.
- Protect damaged skin from dirt and continued abrasion.

2 SKIN, CHAFING AND HANDS

- Dry skin folds and change wet layers promptly.
- Reduce friction with fit changes, dry fabric and task modification.
- Keep nails short enough to avoid tearing but not cut into inflamed tissue.
- Cover cuts and monitor for spreading redness, warmth, swelling or drainage.

3 MOUTH AND DENTAL CARE

- Brush teeth and clean between them with safe tools on a regular schedule.
- Rinse cookware and drinking containers so residue does not build up.
- Do not use sharp improvised dental tools.
- Escalate severe pain, facial swelling, fever or inability to eat or drink.

4 CLOTHING, BEDDING AND MENSTRUAL CARE

- Separate sleep clothing from wet work clothing whenever possible.
- Air bedding and inspect for moisture, insects and odor sources.
- Pack out menstrual products and follow the same hand-hygiene standard.
- Store clean items where food, fuel, fish and animal-processing residue cannot reach them.

BODY CHECK

A two-minute inspection is cheaper than a two-day mobility problem. Record changes when pain, diarrhea, rash, wound drainage or foot damage persists.

FAILURE MODES & HEALTH RED FLAGS

Correct the contamination pathway, not only the symptom.

DIAGNOSE THE SYSTEM

Make the system easier to obey

A good hygiene system works in rain, darkness and fatigue. Place tools where they are used, label clean and dirty containers, and keep the routine short enough to repeat.

FAILURE SIGNAL	LIKELY CAUSE	BEST CORRECTION
Treated water tastes or smells contaminated	Dirty outlet, cross-use container, residue or ineffective treatment.	Stop using it, clean the system, retreat water and investigate the contamination source.
Repeated stomach illness in camp	Water, hand, dish, food or waste-system breach.	Simplify to strict clean/dirty zones; hydrate with safely treated water and seek medical help for red flags.
Persistent wet feet or skin breakdown	Insufficient drying, poor fit, friction or saturated clothing rotation.	Reduce exposure, dry and protect skin, change fit or task, and monitor closely.
Animals investigate hygiene or dish area	Food particles, scented products or concentrated wastewater.	Remove residues, improve storage and relocate or disperse wastewater according to rules.
Wound becomes more painful, red, swollen or draining	Possible infection or ongoing contamination.	Clean and protect according to current first-aid training; seek professional care or evacuation guidance.
Hygiene tasks are routinely skipped	System is too complex, poorly located or consumes too much water.	Reduce steps, place supplies at point of use and build the task into morning and evening routines.

SEEK HELP / EVACUATION GUIDANCE

Persistent inability to hydrate, blood in stool, severe abdominal pain, fever with worsening illness, spreading wound redness, pus, severe foot damage, facial swelling, confusion or marked weakness require prompt professional medical evaluation.

FIELD CARD, RED FLAGS & SOURCES

A practical hygiene standard for long-duration camp.

CARRY THE STANDARD

Stay clean enough to stay capable

Protect water, separate clean and dirty workflows, and inspect the body before small problems become mobility problems.

FIELD CHECKLIST

- ☐ Verify local human-waste, wastewater and pack-out rules.
- ☐ Keep raw-water equipment separate from treated-water storage.
- ☐ Wash hands after toileting and animal processing, and before food or wound care.
- ☐ Protect treated-water outlets from dirty hands and containers.
- ☐ Strain food from dishwater and dispose of wastewater according to local guidance.
- ☐ Pack out toilet paper, wipes and hygiene products where required.
- ☐ Inspect and dry feet, skin folds, gloves, socks and bedding daily.
- ☐ Brush teeth and protect cuts from repeated dirt and friction.
- ☐ Store clean clothing and medical supplies away from food and processing residue.
- ☐ Record persistent illness, skin damage or wound changes and escalate early.

STOP / REASSESS

- The clean-water outlet was contaminated.
- Human waste or wastewater could reach water, trail or camp.
- Diarrhea or vomiting prevents adequate hydration.
- A wound shows spreading redness, swelling, pus or worsening pain.
- Foot or skin damage changes gait or hand function.
- The hygiene system is so complex that it is not being used.

AUTHORITATIVE STARTING POINTS

NPS: Dispose of Waste Properly

home.nps.gov/articles/000/ldkt_int_3.htm

Local-rule priority, cathole and pack-out starting guidance.

Leave No Trace: Dispose of Waste Properly

lnt.org/why/7-principles/dispose-of-waste-properly/

Human waste, toilet paper, wastewater and soap practices.

NPS Leave No Trace Principles

www.nps.gov/articles/leave-no-trace-seven-principles.htm

Planning, durable surfaces, waste and camp-impact principles.

NPS Ten Essentials

www.nps.gov/articles/10essentials.htm

Water treatment, first aid and repair readiness.

VERIFY BEFORE FIELD USE

Rules, access, weather, emergency procedures and land-use practices change. Confirm local requirements, current forecasts, device registration, medical guidance and land-manager instructions before deployment.