

Dry Toilets

Frequently Asked Questions

How much maintenance is required for the dry toilets?

The compost room should be checked every few weeks. If the room is not humid enough, the pile of fecal matter may have to be "watered". The scrapers under the conveyor belts may also need to be freed from toilet paper residues.

How often do the compost piles need to be turned?

For serviced mountain huts, the compost piles should be turned at the end of the summer and/or winter season, so max. 2 times per year.

Reference: In the Grialetsch hut with approx. 6,000 overnight guests per year, the compost piles are turned 1-2 times a year.

How much time is required for the turning?

Approx. 2 to 4 hours, depending on the size of the hut.

Is a mask required for the turning?

A mask is not necessary. A fresh air supply arrives from the toilet room through the air outlet, so there are no unpleasant odours. However, rubber boots, rubber gloves and a work suit are recommended.

What should be considered when building the compost room?

Direct access to the room from both outdoors and indoors is very important. The doors must be airtight, and the room must be covered with a sealing foil or waterproof paint. A floor drain must be installed to remove excess liquids. For further planning details, please contact Vuna.

Does the compost room need to be heated?

The ideal temperature for the compost worms is between 5 and 25°C. Below that, the worms become slow and inactive. Inside the compost piles, they can survive lower outdoor temperatures. The worm eggs freeze at low temperatures, and hatch again in spring when the temperatures rise again. If there is surplus energy available at the hut, a heater could be installed in the compost room to keep the composting process going in the winter.

The worms don't receive any "food" during the unserviced period, how do they survive?

The composting process takes time, so the worms have enough food even over an 8-month winter break. Also, at lower temperatures, the worms become slower and therefore need less food.

Is there any experience with vermicomposting above 2,600 m?

Until recently, the highest hut with a vermicompost was at 2,600 m. In October 2023, new dry toilets were installed at the Blüemlisalp hut at 2,840 m. Moreover, worms were observed in the wild behind old outhouses at the Albert-Heim hut at 2,500 m. The worms have settled there naturally and survive in the snow and cold over the winter months.

Who services the dry toilets?

For the Ecodomeo and Sanisphère dry toilets with a conveyor belt, Vuna GmbH offers a complete service across Switzerland. We recommend servicing the toilets every 3 to 5 years to keep the system in good operational condition.

Can food leftovers be added to the compost room?

We do not recommend adding any food leftovers to the compost room, as they will attract fruit flies, which are too small to be trapped in the fly trap.

What quantity of compost will be harvested?

The quantity of compost depends on the number of guests. The volume and mass of the feces and toilet paper will decompose by 80-90%.

Reference: in the Clariden hut, with approx. 2'000 overnight guests per season, 2 wheelbarrow loads of compost were harvested after 5 years of operation.