

Preventing Sewer Line Backup and Overflow

What not to put into your sewer system

High on the list of experiences nobody wants to have is a sewer backup or overflow. Fortunately, this experience can usually be avoided by being aware of what causes backups and avoiding those causes. The two primary causes of sewer backups and overflows are paper products and grease.

“Flushable” Baby Wipes, Feminine Wipes, Sanitary Products, Paper Towels, and Facial Tissues – are made of materials that don’t break down and can cause pipes to clog. Even those products marketed as “disposable” or “flushable” should not be put into the public sewer. The trash is the proper place for these items.

Grease is a frequent cause of sewer problems. If cooking oil or grease is poured down the drain or flushed down toilets, even when followed by hot water, it eventually cools down, congeals, builds up, and hardens, eventually forming a plug in both home and Municipal sewer lines. Over time, this situation creates backups and overflows. This unfortunate situation can be avoided if you:

- Never pour grease down sink drains or toilets
- Scrape grease and food scraps from plates, pots, pans, utensils and grills into a can or the trash for disposal
- Do not put grease down the garbage disposal. Put baskets/strainers in the sink drains to catch solids and empty into the trash.

Toxic materials are not allowed. Anything that contains mercury or PCPs is prohibited. Paints, pesticides, paint thinners, solvents, explosive mixtures, lubricating oil and expired/unused medications are NOT allowed. Some municipalities provide hazardous waste collection dates to enable proper disposal of these items.

Other common items that should not be flushed into the sewer system:



- Plastic objects (toys, eating utensils, etc.)
- Glass, metal, wood, or soil
- Rags, condoms, sanitary napkins, tampons, diapers, or paper towels
- Cotton balls, swabs, shop towels
- Cigarettes
- Hair, pet fur or clippings
- “Flushable” toilet brushes, wipes and pads
- Wet mopping cloths
- Kitty litter

We appreciate and thank you for your cooperation!