

CITY OF



WASHINGTON

301 C Street, P.O. Box 296, Washington, KS 66968

SANITARY SEWER ISSUES

City staff is concerned with the excessive amount of non-biodegradable items being flushed into the City's sewer system recently. The public needs to be made aware of what types of material are allowed to enter the City sanitary sewer system, and the potential effects on both private and city sewer connections.

WHAT CAUSES SEWERS TO BACK UP???

Sewer backups are caused when sewage collection lines get clogged. These clogs are often caused by fats or greases, paper, feminine sanitary pads or tampons, disposable or cloth diapers, cloth, wood, or any other materials that get caught in the line and plug it up.

WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT?

The City is responsible for maintenance of only the sewer main. The lateral and tap on the main line (from your house to the sewer main) are the responsibility of the utility customer. Be aware of what you put down the sewer to avoid potentially costly (and messy!!) backups and repairs.

TO FLUSH OR NOT TO FLUSH – THAT IS THE QUESTION!!

Just because the package says “flushable” doesn't mean it's true! Many items marked as disposable and/or flushable do not degrade like toilet paper, and they wind up clogging pipes, tangling pumps, and causing messy sewer backups into streets, businesses, and homes.

Our city sewers are designed to dispose of very specific things. Using your toilet for disposal of many modern products will often result in blockages, which can lead to inconvenient, costly, not to mention hazardous messes.

The drains that connect your home to the main sewer are only big enough to carry water, toilet paper, and human waste.

What not to flush:

- Diapers (cloth, disposable, “flushable”)
- Depends (adult diapers)

- Facial tissues
- Baby wipes, disinfectant wipes, moist wipes, etc.
- Toilet bowl scrub pads
- Swiffers
- Napkins (paper or cloth), paper towels
- Dental floss
- Egg shells, nutshells, and coffee grounds
- Fats, oils, and greases
- Food items containing seeds and peelings
- Hair
- Sanitary napkins, tampons, tampon applicators, condoms, or any other non-organic material
- Vitamins, medicines, or other pharmaceuticals
- Wash cloths, towels, rags, or any other cloth item
- Clothing
- Sheet plastic or plastic of any kind
- Cat litter (even if it says “flushable”, it’s not designed to be disposed of in a household sanitary sewer)

What about wet wipes?

If you must use a “wet wipe” type of product rather than just toilet paper, these should be disposed of in the garbage, NOT down the toilet. While many “flushable” wipes packaging says it will disintegrate like toilet paper, that generally is not accurate and can cause blockages and backups.

So what can I do?

- Avoid purchasing “flushable” items.
- Clean with a sponge or a rag that you can reuse.
- Compost your food waste items.
- Try to limit or eliminate your garbage disposal use.
- Discard hazardous materials such as used motor oil, antifreeze, etc. at the household hazardous waste facility.
- If it can’t be reused, recycled, or composted please place it in the garbage.

So what CAN I FLUSH?

- Only toilet paper and human waste. If you have questions about what is okay to flush, please call Colleen at 785-325-2284.