

Public Works – Community Wastewater System(s) Notification!

Every day, homes in our communities are affected by blocked sewer pipes and more so now with the limited supply of toilet paper!

Together, we can reduce blockages to protect your home and communities and also to safeguard the environment, just by making some simple changes to our daily habits and taking extra precautions as we go through the current COVID-19 outbreak and the resulting toilet paper shortage.

In our bathrooms

To avoid unnecessary blockages, put items such as wet wipes and sanitary products in the trash to protect your pipes from plugging off and causing sewerage flooding, and now with the lack of TP in many communities, we can now also add paper towel, socks, t-shirts, underwear, etc.... to this list!

Remember to only flush the three Ps:

- Paper (Toilet Paper)
- Poo
- Peel!



Various wipes don't break down in the same way as toilet paper. Sanitary products and paper towel can also cause problems too if they are flushed, and obviously, clothing items will most definitely cause blockages somewhere down the sewer line, just because it doesn't cause a blockage in your home's toilet or sewer piping, it will most likely cause a blockage in the pumps of your community's wastewater lift station(s)!

What bathroom products you should *PUT IN THE TRASH* and *NOT IN THE TOILET BOWL*?

- Make-up, cleaning and baby wipes (even if they say 'flushable')
- Diapers

- Condoms
- Plastic stir sticks/popsicle sticks
- Plasters and bandages
- Tampons and applicators
- Sanitary and menstrual pads
- Razor blades
- Paper towel and Newspaper
- Socks, T-shirts, Underwear, basically Clothing of any kind!

If in doubt, stick to flushing the 3 Ps to stay blockage free!



In the kitchen

We've all seen reports of giant fatbergs in the news that can cause massive public sewer blockages, leading to sewage backing up into homes and onto the streets!

To help keep our drains, septic tanks and sewers clear and your community free of smelly fatbergs, pour used grease into a container, scrape leftover food and wipe grease from plates and pans before washing.

Sink strainers also help to catch any small bits of food that might otherwise get into your drains.



What you should PUT IN THE FOOD WASTE COMPOSTER OR TRASH and NOT IN THE TOILET BOWL?

- Cooking fat, oil and grease
- Leftover food from plates, pots and pans
- Coffee grounds

Why do we need to help prevent blockages?

Every year, Alberta First Nation Public Works departments deal with an estimated 2,500 blockages in our First Nation communities' homes, private septic systems and public wastewater collection systems, costing millions of dollars to resolve, not to mention clean-up costs if the blockage causes waste to back up into homes!



Around 75 per cent of these blockages involve disposable items and these blockages can easily be avoided by following our advice above!

For homeowners, a blocked sewer or septic system is a major burden and a financial inconvenience, but on an environmental scale it can be disastrous as these blockages can cause pollution in streams, rivers, lakes and on our beaches affecting local wildlife and the planet's ecosystems with waste potentially ending up in the ocean.



For rural septic tank systems and vacuum trucks, over working an engine when the suction hose plugs, unclogging vacuum truck tanks, difficulty discharging at the truck dump site, cause not only headaches but also incur extra costs that could be used elsewhere.

What are our Public Works departments doing to prevent blockages?

We know that wet wipes, and so-called "flushable" wipes, are the biggest cause of blockages in Alberta and the world. Sewerage systems are not designed to cope with today's disposable household products such as make-up, cleaning, toilet and baby wipes. Consumers can sometimes be misled into thinking these products are safe to flush!



So we proactively encourage customers to '**Store it don't pour it!**' through schools, local radio stations, the media, our community newsletters, social media channels and meeting with community members at local events.



We engage with food service businesses, such as takeaways & restaurants in our communities to ensure have the right equipment in place to prevent fat, oil and grease from being poured into sewers, causing fatbergs and inevitably major sewer/wastewater

collection system blockages.

Throughout the year, Public Works also carry out sewer system inspections and maintain or upgrade pipes and pumps where necessary to ensure the network operates as it should, and that waste can safely flow to our wastewater treatment facilities/lagoons to be made safe enough to be released into the environment!



Please help us in preventing sewage blockages by following the above advice in regards to what shouldn't be flushed down your homes toilet(s).

Thank You!
Your local Public Works Department