

## Wipes Clog Pipes!

Save yourself a mess *and* money – Watch [VIDEO1](#) or [VIDEO2](#)  
(Disclaimer - these videos may not be appropriate for the squeamish)

The increased use of “convenience” wipes is creating problems for home and business owners and increasing headaches for the operators of the local sewage system, as well as sewage systems throughout the country.

“Convenience” wipes are items such as baby wipes, disinfectant wipes, and even many of the cleansing cloths advertised as “flushable”. The problem is that although, yes, you may be able to flush these products down the toilet, their cloth-like material does not break down in the sewer system like toilet paper. A recent *Consumer Reports* test performed with a lab stirrer showed that toilet paper breaks down quite readily in a matter of seconds whereas a supposedly “flushable” wipe did not even begin to fray after half an hour (see the video above). You can try this experiment yourself – even get your kids involved (it would make a wonderful science fair project).

Each home or business has a sewer line which connects the house or building to the sanitary sewer system. This sewer line is generally called a “lateral” and it is the property owner’s responsibility to keep the lateral in good working order. Sewer line clogs caused by “flushable” wipes, grease, paper towels, rags and the like have created messes in homes and can be expensive to unclog. If these items move further down the sanitary sewer system, they can lead to clogs in main sewer lines and in the pumps at sewage treatment facilities. Such clogs greatly increase maintenance costs and can also cause sewer backups and overflows, something nobody wants to see (or smell).

Remember that what you flush or pour down the drain may clog *your* pipes – leading to **expensive remedies** – and may also:

- Create dangers to workers
- Cause problems in the sewer system
- Adversely impact the treatment facility
- Cause harm to the environment
- Ultimately jeopardize the welfare of the public

The Authority’s regulations prohibit the discharge of sewer clogging materials into the sewer system. And the Authority will take enforcement action against any residential, commercial, or industrial facility that it determines to have caused a sewer backup due to flushing such products. We aren’t saying don’t use them, just throw them in the garbage when you’re done – the toilet is not a trashcan!

So please help to keep the flowing going...keep the “wipes” out of pipes! Thank you.

**Do Not Flush These Items – Place in the Trash or Recycle Appropriately**

- Convenience Wipes – as noted above, a common cause of clogs
- Disposable Products – Diapers, disposable mop/sweeper heads, feminine hygiene products
- Paper towels, dish rags, scouring pads
- Food products larger than ½ inch in any dimension
- Kitchen Grease (another major clogger)
- Flammable Liquids – Gasoline, paint thinner, diesel fuel, lighter fluid, solvents
- Motor oil, transmission fluid, anti-freeze
- Pharmaceutical Products – The lingering effects of the chemicals in these products can contaminate streams and other waterways
- Low pH Products – Battery acid, pool chemicals, muriatic acid
- High pH Products – Sodium hydroxide (aka lye/caustic soda), ammonia