



PREVENTING SEWER BLOCKAGES IN THE HOME



It's seems easy to dispose of almost anything in the toilet—flush and forget. But flushing the wrong things down the toilet can cause serious and expensive problems for your home's plumbing lines.

Many sewer blockages occur between the house or business and the utility's sewer main, where the property owner is responsible for correcting the problem. Avoiding blockages could mean avoiding an unnecessary plumbing bill.

Pouring grease, fat or oil down the drain can lead to sewer overflows and backups. When washed down the drain, grease and oil can adhere to the insides of the pipes that carry the wastewater from homes and businesses to the sewer treatment facility.

Over time, this build up of grease can restrict the flow of wastewater, or worse yet, block the homeowners' or utility's sewer pipes. These blockages can lead to sewage overflows or backups in homes and businesses. It can also have an adverse affect on the environment if the overflow enters our rivers, lakes and streams.

The good news is that blockages caused by grease are preventable. Customers can do their part to reduce grease and oil that enters the sewer system by properly disposing of grease and oil and not washing it down the drain.

TIPS FOR HOMEOWNERS

- Never pour grease into sinks, toilets or down drains.
- Allow the grease to cool and use a rubber scraper to remove the fat, oil and grease from cookware, plates, utensils and cooking surfaces. Then place the grease in a sealed container and dispose of it in the trash.
- Install baskets/strainers in sink drains to catch food scraps and empty them into the trash.
- Please keep in mind, garbage disposals do not prevent grease from washing down the drain. Also, detergents that claim to dissolve grease may pass it down the line and cause problems in other parts of the wastewater system.
- Share this information with your friends and neighbors.

USE THE TRASH CAN FOR TRASH!

Another tip to help prevent sewer overflows, blockages and backups is to dispose of trash in the trash can instead of flushing it down the drain. Flushing baby wipes (even those that are labeled flushable or biodegradable) and paper towels down the toilet has become an issue in some areas. These should be tossed in the trash!



MATERIAL NOT TO BE DISPOSED THROUGH SEWER SYSTEM

Below are list of items that should never be poured down the drain or flushed down the toilet:

- Acids
- Baby wipes
- Cat litter
- Cigarette filters
- Condoms
- Diapers
- Facial tissues
- Food scraps
- Engine coolants (antifreeze)
- Gasoline or motor fuels
- Grease & fats
- Hair
- Herbicides (solids or liquids)
- Paint & paint thinners
- Paper
- Paper towels
- Pesticides (solids or liquids)
- Petroleum solvents
- Photographic development solutions
- Plastics
- Sanitary napkins
- Septic tank additives
- Tampons
- Textiles
- Toxic chemicals
- Varnishes
- Used motor oils
- Water softener backwash



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TIPS FOR BUSINESS OWNERS

- Never dispose of or pour grease into sinks, toilets or down drains.
- Allow the grease to cool and use a rubber scraper to remove the fat, oil and grease from cookware, plates, utensils and cooking surfaces. Then place the grease in a sealed container and dispose of it in the trash. Check with your waste hauler to see if they provide containers for this purpose.
- Install an appropriately-sized grease trap(s) or a grease interceptor. These units allow oil to float to the top and be retained, while the remainder of the wastewater passes through.
- Maintain grease traps and interceptors according to the manufacturer's recommended instructions. Have it cleaned and serviced on a frequent basis to ensure that the grease that accumulates does not hinder the unit's operation.
- Never put solids in grease traps or interceptors.

OTHER HELPFUL TIPS

Flushing the wrong things down the drain can cause problems in your property's plumbing lines and the local sewer system. While it might seem to make your daily life easier, putting the wrong thing down the toilet or drain can and do cause blockages, which take time and money to fix.

1. Never pour or flush toxic chemicals or contaminants down the drain that could cause damage to the wastewater system's electrical, mechanical, biological and physical process components or cause harm to the groundwater, soil or atmosphere.
2. Prevent surface or groundwater from entering into the wastewater system. Sump pumps, basement or crawl space drains, roof gutters, down spouts and floor drains cannot be connected to the wastewater system. Pipes and clean-outs should be properly maintained to assure a watertight connection.
3. Prevent damage to all system components located on the property being served.
4. Maintain and repair the service lateral to prevent clogging and leaking.

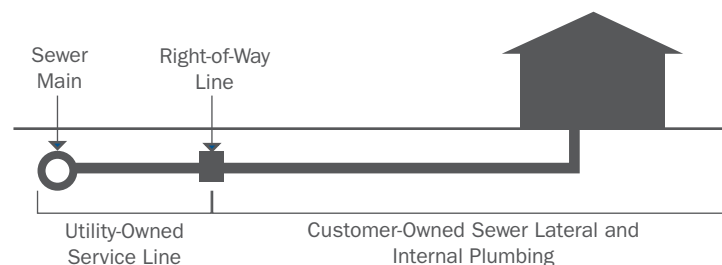
REPORTING SEWER OVERFLOWS

If you are an Illinois American Water wastewater customer, please report any suspected sewer overflows to 1-800-422-2782.

ABOUT THE WASTEWATER SYSTEM

Wastewater flows from the property through the customer-owned household sewer pipes to the company's collection system (sewer pipes). The collection system then delivers the wastewater to a sewage treatment plant. Our collection system consists of wastewater collection pipes located in the public right-of-ways and easements. Each property is connected to the collection system via a **customer-owned sewer lateral**. This sewer lateral and internal plumbing is the property and the responsibility of the customer.

UTILITY-OWNED VS. CUSTOMER-OWNED PORTION OF THE SEWER SYSTEM



Please note:
This diagram is a generic representation. Variations may apply.



SERVICE. ONE MORE WAY WE KEEP LIFE FLOWING.