

Nondispersibles

Public Education Message

Its a toilet not a trash can


Bill Gefroh

City of Bismarck

Doing North Dakota Proud

After having dug to a depth of 10 feet last year, New York scientists found traces of copper wire dating back 100 years and came to the conclusion, that their ancestors already had a telephone network more than 100 years ago.

Not to be outdone by the New Yorkers, in the weeks that followed a California archaeologist dug to a depth of 20 feet, and shortly after, a story in the LA Times read: "California archaeologists, after finding 200 year old copper wire, have concluded that their ancestors already had an advanced high-tech communications network a hundred years earlier than the New Yorkers".



One week later a local newspaper in ND reported the following: "After digging as deep as 30 feet in his pasture near Fessenden ND, Sven, a self-taught archaeologist, reported that he found absolutely nothing. Sven has therefore concluded that 300 years ago, North Dakota had already gone wireless".

North Dakotans are such a proud bunch!

Public Outreach on What is Flushable

The fundamental problem is a failure of a discerning consumer. They're not distinguishing between what's flushable and what's not flushable. **There's an established pattern on consumer behaviors that needs to be modified.** *Water*

Environment & Technology Magazine 12/2014, Jennifer Fulcher, comment by Rob Greenwood – 2014 WEFTEC Technical Work Group Panel Discussion

A lot of products can be flushed, but this does not mean these products will not cause problems when flushed.



Displaying
“flushable” and
non-flushable
products mixed
together at point
of sale.



Non-Dispersibles

While products such as wet wipes are advertised to be “flushable,” “biodegradable,” and “safe for the sewer and septic systems,” rapid dispersibility of these products within the sanitary sewer system has not been observed.

Field observations have found these types of products to be a cause of back-ups within the sewer system leading to Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSOs).

Flushables are a Nationwide Problem



Courtesy Orange County (CA)
Sanitary Sewer District

Problems From Flushing Flushables

Clogs pipes and pumps

Maintenance Costs

Disposal Costs

Engineering Costs



Flushable Product Problems

- * Wastewater collection crews have to regularly unclog mounds of disposable wipes and paper towels from screens and pumps.
- * When equipment plugs, wastewater can back up into homes and overflow into our rivers and waterways.
- * Even though products are labeled “flushable”, **they do not disperse or break down enough** to make it to the wastewater plant without causing problems.

Bar Screen at Lift Station

Public Works staff
removes ~four 5-gallon
pails/day of
wipes and towels



Two gallons of paper towels
& wipes can easily plug a
pump.

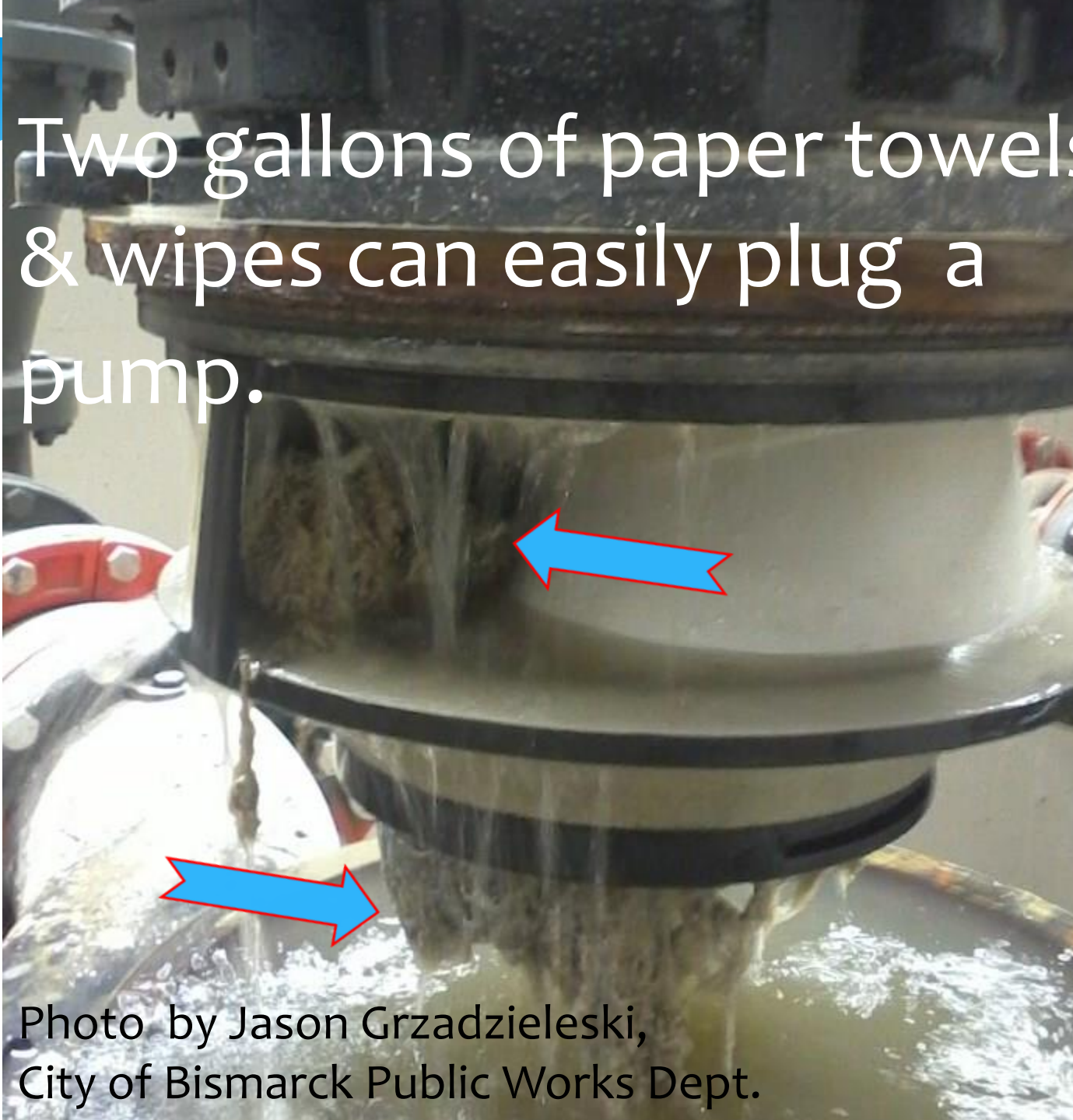


Photo by Jason Grzadzieleski,
City of Bismarck Public Works Dept.

Usage of Flushable Products

- * Requires more frequent sewer pipe jetting
 - * Increase in equipment maintenance
 - * Pump failure or replacement sooner than normal.
 - * Requires Public Works staff to generate and provide more public education
 - * Increase sanitary sewer cost
-
- * Wet wipes are a \$6 billion-a-year industry, with sales increasing 5 to 6 percent a year since 2007. Flushable wet wipes represent a significant portion of this industry. At roughly the same time, wastewater treatment officials across the country began reporting an increased number of sewer backups, pump breakdowns, and overflows – traced back to flushable baby wipes and adult wipes.





Photo from Southern California Alliance of Publicly Owned Treatment Works

The Southern California Alliance of Publicly Owned Treatment Works (SCAP) is a non-profit corporation organized to help ensure that regulations affecting POTWs and collection systems are reasonable and in the public's best interest.



Non-Dispersible Issue

- * Wastewater officials across the U.S. have been trying to spread the message that not just anything can go down the toilet, and they have recently taken aim at wipes.
- * A public awareness campaign by the Orange County Sanitation District in California called “What 2 Flush” emphasizes that the toilet is meant only for the three Ps — pee, poop and toilet paper.
- * It even says **facial tissues are too sturdy to be flushed**. Among the more unusual items it says people commonly flush that risk causing clogs: cat litter, condoms and dental floss.

How do wipes affect the public

- * Plugged toilets and pipes, - **flushable products can catch on rough surfaces** inside pipes and cause blockage.
- * Interior home damage due to wastewater overflow
- * Plumbing repairs and increase cost
- * Clogged laterals, can back up sewage into their homes
- * Blockage/obstruction downstream in City pipes where the **flushable products catch on roots and stick to grease coated pipes** can lead to blockage and SSOs.
- * Increase in sanitary sewer fees

What are the Manufacturers Doing About This Problem?

- * Some are doing nothing. Business as usual.
- * Some are manufacturing smaller sized wipes (they still don't disperse). This requires no new equipment or technology.
- * Some, like Clorox and SC Johnson, are actually developing a “new” flushable spunlace wipe that have very low wet strength (half of a standard flushable). **These are still capable of hanging up on roots or in pumps or bar screens.**
- * Others like Kimberly-Clark have developed an actual dispersible wipe (the Cottonelle Rollwipe) using a reversible ionic bond for strength but which disperses in the toilet.

Who are the “Players” in the Discussion?

APWA: American Public Works Association

INDA: Association of the Nonwoven Fabrics Industry. Includes Kimberly-Clark, Procter & Gamble, and many others

MWWCA: Maine Wastewater Control Association

NACWA: National Association of Clean Water Agencies

NEWEA: New England Water Environment Association

OCSD: Orange County (CA) Sanitation District

PWD: Portland (ME) Water District

WEF: Water Environment Federation

... and many, many more!!!

Working With The Product Manufacturers

- * INDA (Association of the Nonwoven Fabrics Industry).
- * EDANA (International association serving the nonwovens and related industries).
- * In 2004 INDA formed a Flushability Task Force and embarked on a 2 year study to develop standards and guidelines for assessing the flushability of products and to develop a test method for the approach. Biggest hurdle was arriving at an agreed-to definition of flushability.
- * Require warning labels on products, such as: “This product is NOT dispersible”. “This product may cause clogs in obstructed drain lines”. “This product may clog ejector and grinder pumps”. “This product will end up on a screen in the wastewater treatment plant”.

Definition of flushable: depends who you ask!

Manufacturers say: “Products not designed to be flushed are in some cases being flushed **due to lack of consumer education**”

(INDA); flushability assessment looks at disposition in environment (landfill)

Wastewater utilities say: “Should degrade in a way similar to toilet paper- dispersible.”

Consumers say: “Isn’t ‘flushable’ the same thing as ‘disposable’?”

INDA's Take on it

Wipes usage has been increasing at a healthy 10% per year but only 5% of wipes are marketed as “flushable” (less than 1% in North America).

- INDA members see baby wipes and similar as very different from “flushable”.
- INDA developed “Do Not Flush” logo, but members are not willing to put it on valuable “real estate” on front of product packaging.
- Focusing on R & D: “World of Wipes” conference, water-soluble binders.
- Developed “Flushability Assessment” - voluntary, contains some vague language.

What is Nonwoven Fabric?

Sheet or web structures bonded together by entangling fiber or filaments (and by perforating films) mechanically, thermally, or chemically.

They are flat, porous sheets that are made directly from separate fibers or from molten plastic or plastic film.

They are not made by weaving or knitting and do not require converting the fibers to yarn.

“Dispersible” Products

“Dispersible” means product dissolves and becomes part of water flow.

Toilet paper is dispersible.

Toilet Paper After 30 Seconds



Toilet Paper after 5 Min.

Paper Towel after 24 Hr.



2011 Test Results from Portland, Maine Paper Towels 42%



2011 Test Results from Portland, Maine

Baby Wipes 24%



2011 Test Results from Portland, Maine

Feminine Hygiene 17%



2011 Test Results from Portland, Maine

Flushables 8%



Other: Household Wipes 4%, Cosmetic 3%, Medical 2%, Hands, Face and Body (HFB) 1%

Field Study #2 –Forensics Maine

42% Paper Products

24% Baby Wipes

17% Feminine Hygiene Products

8% “Flushable” Wipes

10% Other

Field Study #2 –Forensics Maine

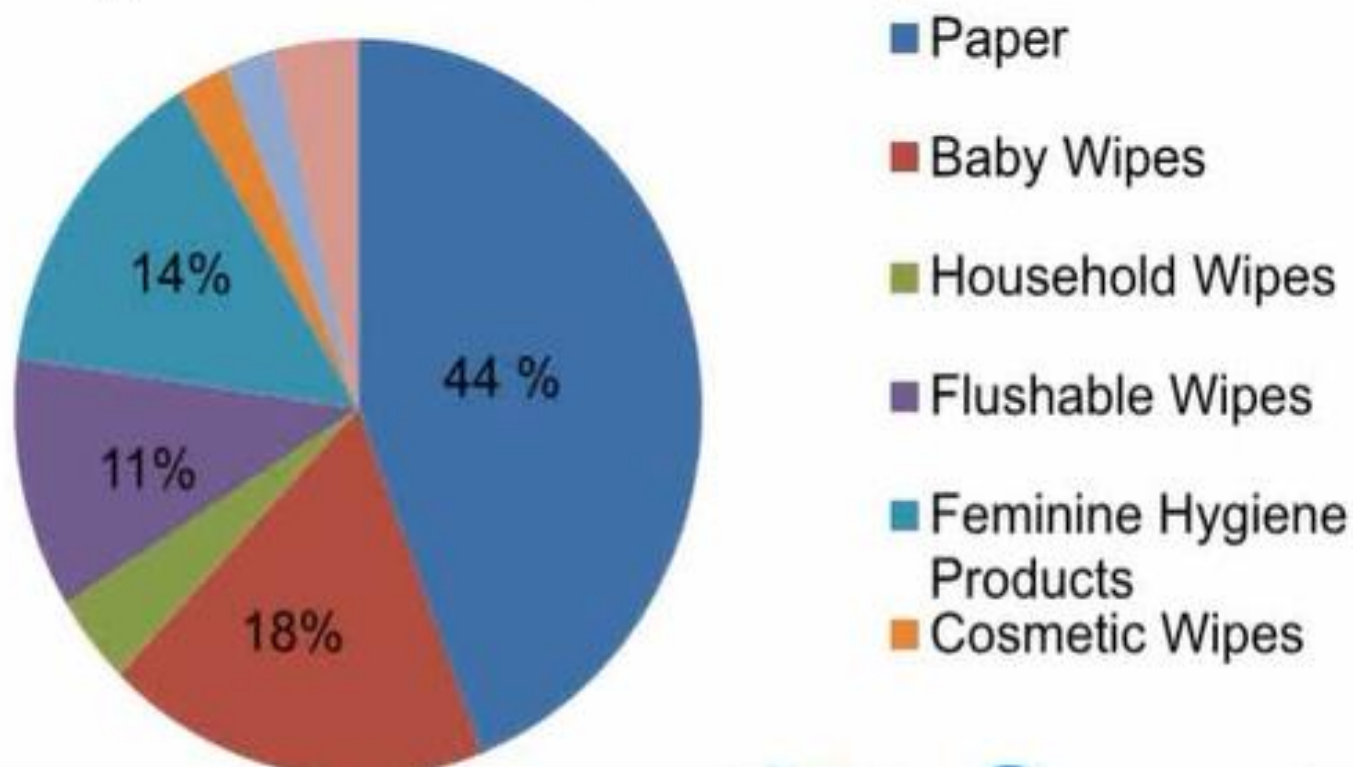
90% +/- of the products removed from the sewer during the test are non-flushable

The “Flushable Products” do not have a lot of structural strength and tear easily
Paper, specifically paper towels from public restroom dispensers, is a major issue.

Baby Wipes are indestructible squares of plastic.

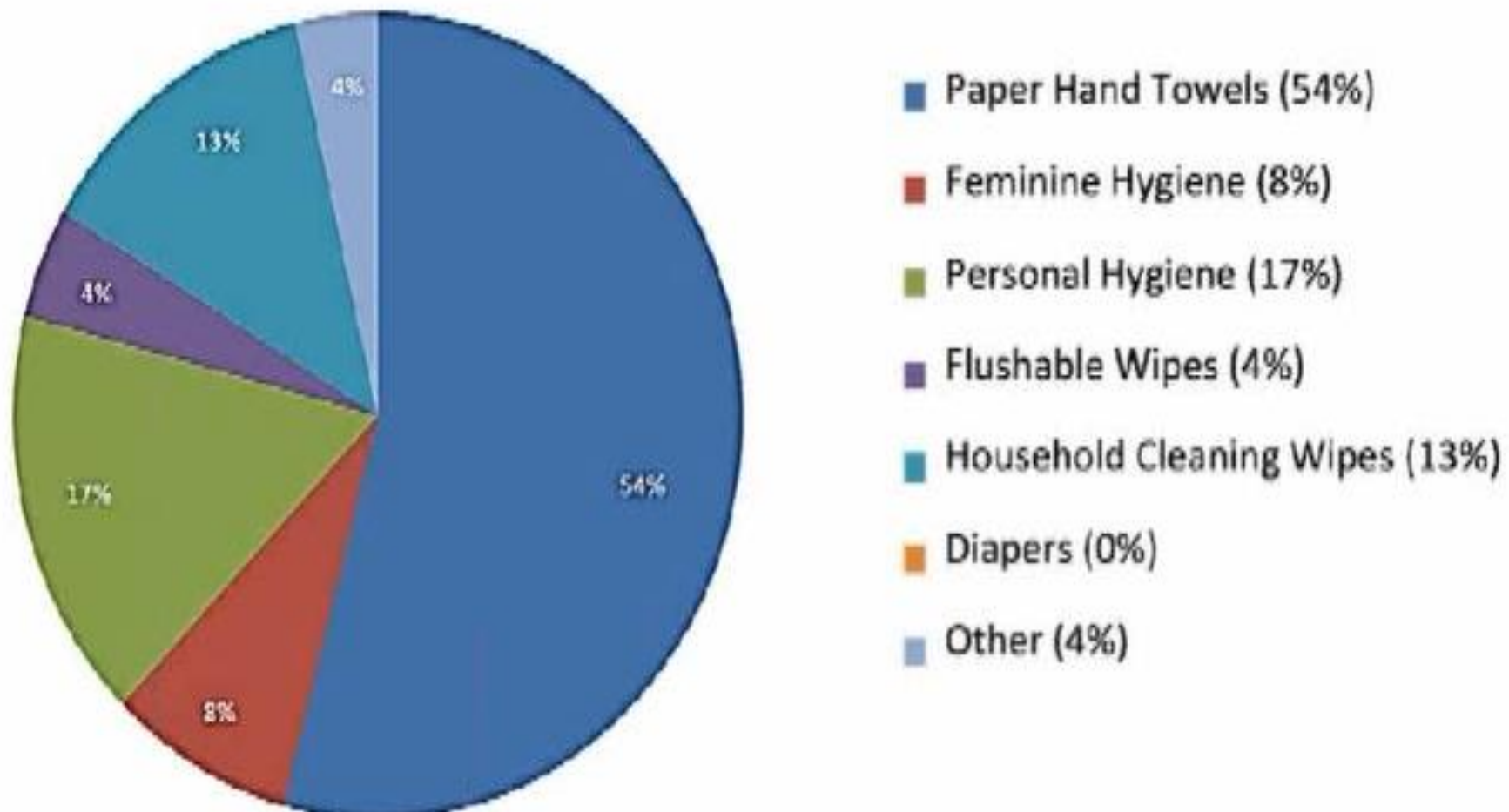
Maine: LD 781 (CONT)

- Result: INDA assisted with “forensics” project at Portland Water District Cottage Place Pump Station, Westbrook, ME
 - September 2011 and January 2012
- Demonstrated that “flushables” do not disperse as claimed.
- MWWCA developed SOP Form to document % by category in clogs; getting forms from around the country!



California: AB 2256 (cont)

- Result: INDA assisted with “forensics” project at Moraga Pump Station, Contra Costa County, CA (near San Francisco)
- Methodology and results were questioned.



Public Works Magazine October 2012 Issue - Part 1

According to Association of the Nonwoven Fabrics Industry (INDA) field tests with wastewater utilities, nondispersibles break down as:

50% paper towels from public restrooms;
they get to the treatment plant relatively intact
and build up on bar screens

25% baby wipes

25% feminine hygiene, household cleaning, and
cosmetic wipes; tampon strings wrap around
other stuff to create a solid mass of material.

Public Education Message Research

Don't Rush to **Flush!**
You'll Strain the Drain!



SAGE
PRODUCTS INC



Know what should go down the drain that is sewer safe

It's simple, the toilet is only meant to flush the three P's—pee, poop and paper.

Human waste and toilet paper should be the only thing going down the toilet. Unfortunately, over the years, people have turned the toilet into a trash can. From medications and sanitary products to deceased pet fish and cigarette butts, if it fits, people flush it. Flushing these types of items down the toilet causes home pipes to clog, wastes water (up to 5 gallons of water every time you flush) and most importantly can have a huge impact on our sewers and not to mention our ocean. Below is a list of items that people commonly flush that should not be going down the toilet:

Sanitary Products, Paper Towels, Diapers, Baby Wipes and Facial Tissues—are made of materials that don't break down and can cause pipes to clog. The trash is the place for these items.

Prescription Drugs, Over-The-Counter Medications—contain chemicals that you don't want entering the wastewater supply. Keep in mind that sewage is treated and recycled, so we want to keep our wastewater as chemical-free as possible. Our wastewater treatment plants were not designed to remove chemicals from the water. The best way to dispose of items like these is to make them undesirable, such as crushing them and then mixing with coffee grounds, kitty litter or dirt before sealing them in a plastic bag and disposing in the trash.

Kitty Litter—(especially clay kitty litter) will sooner or later clog your pipes, even the ones that claim to be "flushable." Far more problematic is Toxoplasmosis, a parasite found in cat waste that is harmful to marine biology. It's better to keep your cat waste out of wastewater and just put it in the trash.

Condoms and Dental Floss—both cause more problems than you'd imagine. They don't biodegrade and can cause pipes to clog.

Besides the three P's the only other thing that should be going down the drain is what comes out of the faucet.

The toilet is not the only drain that people are using to get rid of unwanted waste; people are also known to use the kitchen sink as a trash can. Since the invention of the garbage disposal, which claims to grind even the hard stuff such as small bones and fruit peels, people have turned the sink drain into a common destination for kitchen waste. Again, as long as it fits, people throw it or pour it down the drain. Letting trash flow and go down the kitchen sink (or any other drain in the house) may cause pipes to clog and can eventually lead to sewage spills that harm the environment. Here is a list of the most common things that people dump into their sinks instead of disposing of them properly:

Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG)—should never be poured down the sink or garbage disposal. FOG sticks to the interior surface of the sewer pipes, hardens over time and eventually may cause sewage to backup and lead to a sewage spill in your home or on our streets. Running hot water as you pour the grease down the drain will not help either. Many people are unaware that pouring hot water and detergent down the drain only breaks up grease temporarily. The best way to get rid of FOG is to let it cool/harden, mix it with other absorbent materials, place it in a bag or container and then throw it in the trash.

Food—should not be flushed down the sink. The best way to get rid of food is to compost what you can and wipe or scrape the remnants in the trash. Use a drain screen in your sink to catch any remaining bits of food as you wash the dishes. Use your garbage disposal sparingly. Using the drain as a dump will have unforeseen consequences of clogging sewer lines and possible backups in your home.

Coffee grounds and eggshells—should be properly disposed of in the trash. Never put them in the garbage disposal. Crushed eggshells and coffee grounds can also be used for making garden compost.

Hair—always seems to make its way past the plug. Hair will catch and stick to other items and is very difficult to get out of piping once it gets in. Keep hair from going into the pipes by using a fine drain screen to catch hair in your bathtub and shower and dispose of it properly in the trash.

Household hazardous materials—such as motor oil, pesticides, paint and solvents should never be poured down the drain. All of these are highly toxic and will cause long term damage to the environment. Dispose of these items by contacting the nearest household hazardous waste collection center where these and other household items can be dropped off. If there is just a little unused paint left, put the can in a safe place (inaccessible to children, pets, or ignition sources) and remove the lid so the remaining contents can dry out. Once the contents have dried out, replace the lid and dispose of the can in the trash or recycler.

Let's keep our wastewater flowing and our oceans clean. Educate yourself and others. Know What 2 Flush and what to put down the drain. Protect our sewers and environment!



Know What 2 Flush!

The toilet is only meant to flush the three P's

- * Pee,
- * Poop and
- * Toilet paper.

Human waste and toilet paper should be the only thing going down the toilet. **Unfortunately, over the years, people have turned the toilet into a trash can.** From medications and sanitary products to deceased pet fish and cigarette butts, if it fits, people flush it.

Know What 2 Flush!

Below is a list of items that people commonly flush that should not be going down the toilet.

- * Sanitary Products,
- * Paper Towels,
- * Diapers,
- * Baby Wipes and
- * Facial Tissues

These products are made of materials that don't break down and can cause all pipes to clog. The trash is the place for these items. <http://www.what2flush.com/>

Know What 2 Flush!

Flushing non-dispersibles items down the toilet causes home pipes to clog and most importantly can have a huge impact on our sewers.

Can the Wipes

Many household cleaning products are labeled and marketed as “disposable” but should not be flushed down the toilet.

Items include:

- disinfecting wipes
- baby wipes
- mop refills
- paper towels
- towelettes

These products don't dissolve. They clog pipes and cause expensive and time consuming repairs for homeowners.

These products also clog public sewer pipes and pump station equipment leading to sewer backups. Save yourself and your wastewater utility from a pain in the drain—put wipes, rags and towels in the trash, not the toilet!

[Wipes Clog Pipes sign](#) (PDF, 292KB)

Proper [household waste disposal](#)

More ways to [Join the Cycle](#)

<http://www.cleanwaterservices.org/Residents/JoinTheCycle/CanTheWipes/default.aspx>



Wipes clog pipes!

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(503) 681-3600

www.cleanwaterservices.org

CleanWater  Services

Who is trying to solve the problem?

NACWA – National Association of Clean Water Agencies, blog/info site, nacwa.com/flushables

WEF Collection Systems Flushables Subcommittee (2009)– working with INDA

WEF HOD Workgroup on Non Dispersibles (Fall 2012)

Public Awareness, Legislative Support, Gather Data

INDA – mixed results. Maine literature review shows they've been expecting this fight for years yet being reactive, not proactive

Who is trying to solve the problem?

COSTCO – mixed results

State MA's–Pump Clog SOP and info repository Dropbox (ME); what2flush.com (CA); email DL (many!)

American Public Works Association – gathering steam?

WEFTEC panel discussion – Fall 2013



Q: What do you call a microbiologist that has traveled to every country in the world?

A: A man of many cultures.

Biology is the only science in which multiplication is the same thing as division.

"Mama, Get The Hammer (There's A Fly On Papa's Head)"

Something to Ponder:

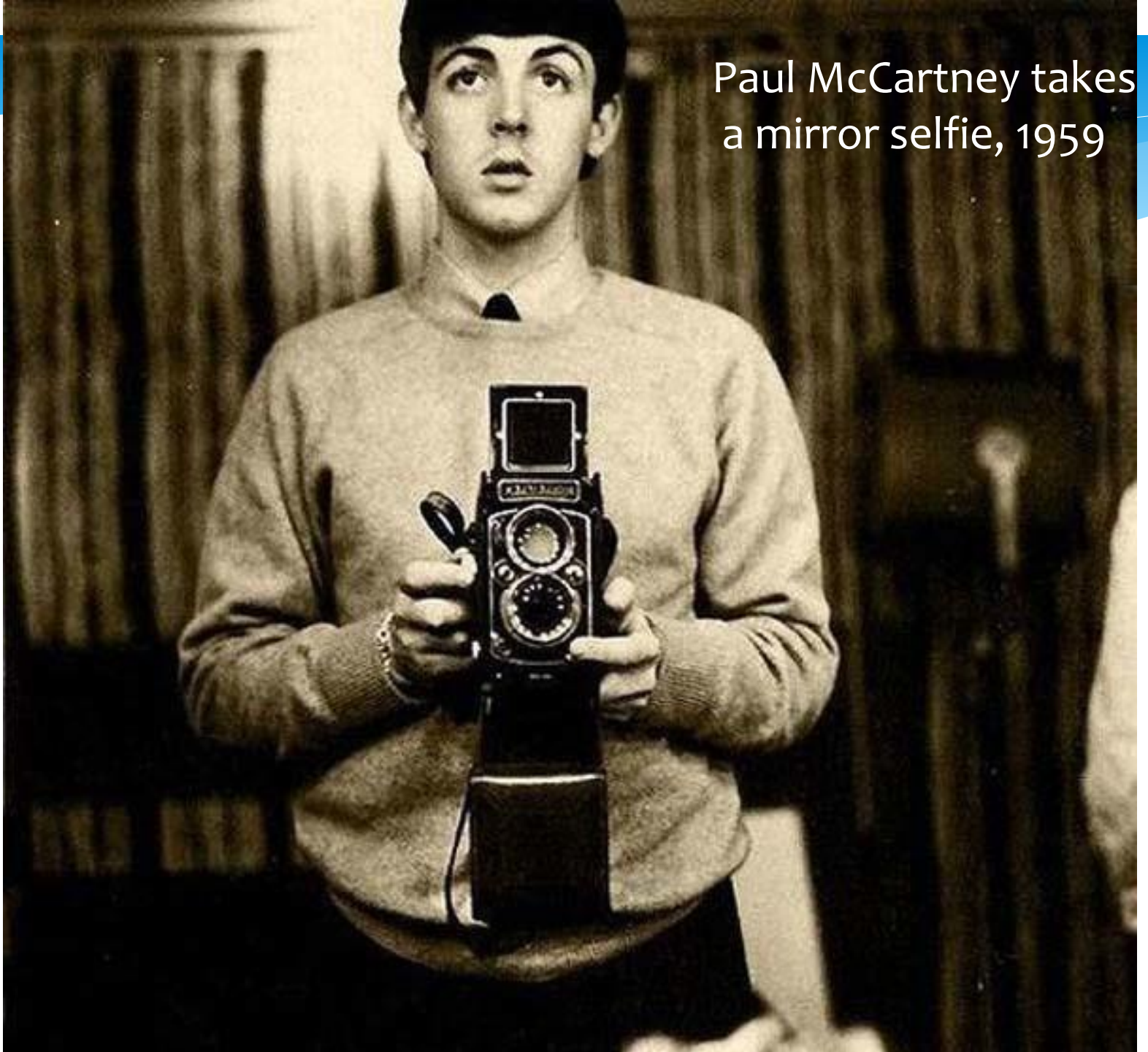
How important does a person have to be before they are considered assassinated instead of just murdered?

Why do you have to "put your two cents in"...but it's only a "penny for your thoughts"?
Where's that extra penny going to? Taxes?

One wheel motorcycle in 1931,
it could reach a speed of 93 mph



Paul McCartney takes
a mirror selfie, 1959



THREE THINGS THAT **DON'T GO DOWN THE DRAIN** ■■■

GREASE, OIL, AND FATS



Scrape fats, oils, and grease into the garbage.

FIBROUS MATERIAL



Recycle and reuse as much as possible. Toss fibrous material, like cloth, rags, and wipes, in the trash.

TOXIC CHEMICALS



Use natural cleaners like vinegar and borax. If you use toxic chemicals, use them up or dispose of them properly.

WHERE DOES IT

ALL GO?

You may be surprised to learn that what you flush down the toilet or wash down the drain can end up in our rivers and bays – even if you have a private septic tank.





Programs & Student Resources » What 2 Flush

WHAT 2 FLUSH

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What 2 Flush: Know what should go down the drain that is sewer safe



It's simple, the toilet is only meant to flush the three P's—pee, poop and paper. Human waste and toilet paper should be the only thing going down the toilet. Unfortunately, over the years, people have turned the toilet into a trash can. From medications and sanitary products to deceased pet fish and cigarette butts, if it fits, people flush it. Flushing these types of items down the toilet causes home pipes to clog, wastes water (up to 5 gallons of water every time you flush) and most importantly can have a huge impact on our sewers and not to mention our ocean. Below is a list of items that people commonly flush that should not be going down the toilet.

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Prescription Drugs, Over-The-Counter Medications—contain chemicals that you don't want entering the wastewater supply. [Keep in mind that sewage is treated and recycled, so we want to keep our wastewater as chemical-free as possible.](#) Our wastewater treatment plants were not designed to remove all those chemicals from the water. The best way to dispose of items like these is to make them undesirable, such as crushing them and then mixing with coffee grounds, kitty litter or dirt before sealing them in a plastic bag and disposing in the trash.

Kitty Litter—(especially clay kitty litter) will sooner or later clog your pipes, even the ones that claim to be "flushable." Far more problematic is Toxoplasmosis, a parasite found in cat waste that is harmful to marine biology. It's better to keep your cat waste out of wastewater and just put it in the trash.

Condoms and Dental Floss—both cause more problems than you'd imagine. They don't biodegrade and can cause pipes to clog.

The only thing that should be going down the drain is what comes out of the faucet.

Smart Bunnies Know Flush Only Toilet Tissue



OTHER PRODUCTS WILL **PLUG** THE PIPES!

It's a fact. Wipes, diapers, cloths, feminine hygiene products and other "disposable" or "flushable" items may be handy to use, but they should

Message: Keep it Simple



It's a Toilet, Not a Trashcan!

WEF Public Education



Disposable WIPES

Minimize use of disposable wipes.

Discard used wipes in the trash.

Do Flush



- ⦿ Toilet Paper
- ⦿ Human Waste
- ⦿ Pet Waste

Don't Flush



- ⦿ Disposable Wipes
- ⦿ Dental Floss
- ⦿ Paper Towels
- ⦿ Feminine Products
- ⦿ Cotton Balls
- ⦿ Bandages
- ⦿ Syringes or Needles
- ⦿ Gum

POLLUTION SOLUTION

A MESSAGE FROM THE PORTLAND WATER DISTRICT



IF IT **IS NOT** TOILET PAPER,
IT SHOULD **NOT BE FLUSHED**



Portland Water District

225 Douglas Street | PO Box 3553

Portland, Maine 04103

207.761.8310 | customerservice@pwd.org | www.pwd.org

www.facebook.com/MyPortlandWater

www.twitter.com/MyPortlandWater



Labels: the “Good”



Labels: the “Good”

HOME 360
BABY

is thick, cushiony-soft, and
ate baby's skin. This mild
& Vitamin E to help

rin, Polysorbate 20, Disodium
nsis Leaf Extract, Tocopheryl Acetate,
lower Extract, Disodium EDTA, Phenoxylethanol,
tylcarbamate, Citric Acid, Parfum/Fragrance

in the United States Patent and Trademark

corner of sheet through opening and replace
next sheet pops up automatically. When
ntee freshness keep lid tightly closed when
plastic bag or trash receptacle. Do not flush.



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For product questions or concerns call
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Made under one or more of the
following U.S. Patents:
5,497,903; 6,112,118;
7,188,111



LOT 12258 N22150215
BEST IF USED BY: 03/1
Made in USA



Labels: the “Good”????

Kids can clean themselves with
Harmon® Face Values™ Flushable Toddler Wipes
These wipes clean better than dry toilet tissue alone.
They're made with mild cleansers and Aloe & Vitamin E
and are gentle on delicate skin.
They're great for the entire family!

AHLSTROM

brings you Hydraspun® Dispensible

Hydraspun® is a registered
trademark of Ahlstrom.



Made with unique Hydraspun
fabric, Harmon® Face Values
Wipes actually break apart
reducing the chance for blockages
and in waste management

CM X 20 Y W3

Labels:
the
“Bad”

?

*Compare to Kleenex®
Cottonelle Fresh®

moist flushable wipes

Enhanced
Cleansing & Freshness
Better than dry
toilet paper alone



- Ultra Soft
- Gentle on Skin
- Safe for Sewer & Septic

600
Pre-moistened Wipes



perfect for the entire family!

10 x



60 ct Solo Packs
9.5 in x 6.5 in
(17.3 cm x 15.3 cm)

2012

?

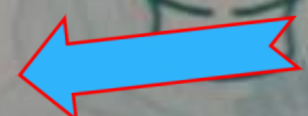
Labels: the “Bad”

FOR EXTERNAL USE ONLY.

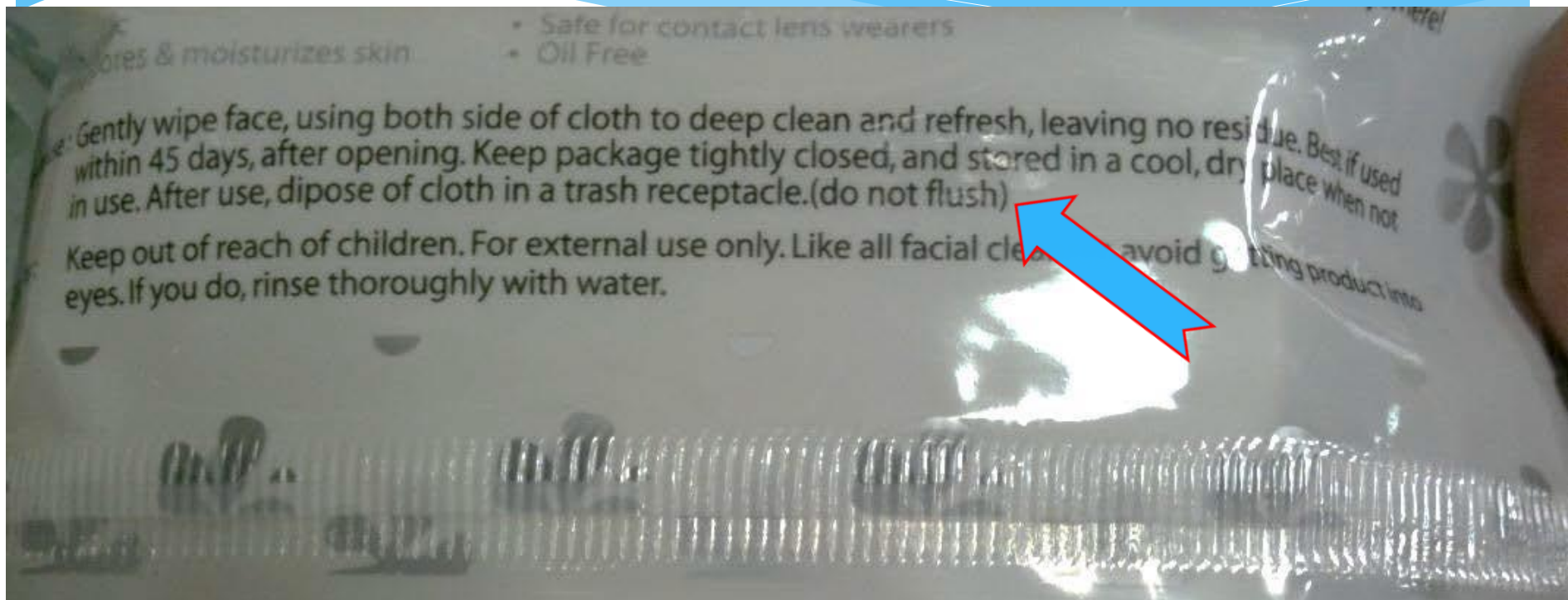
Suitable for use in external vaginal area.

Wipes are safe to flush in properly maintained sewer and septic system.

For best results, flush one or two wipes at a time.

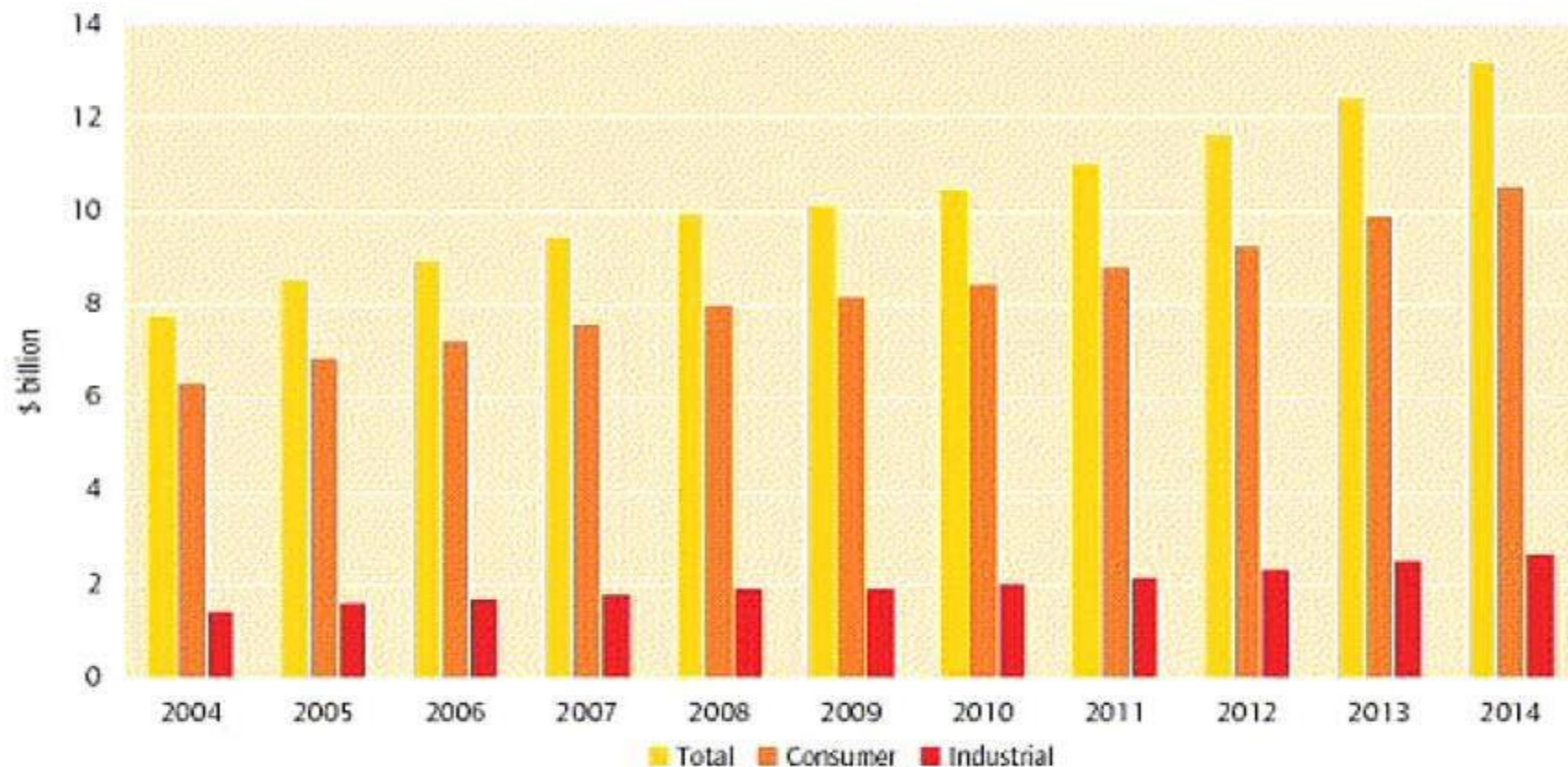


Labels the “Bad” Placing disposal information only in fine print



Consumer Wipes: Prevalence of Use

FIGURE E.2 Sales of consumer and industrial wipes, 2004-14 (\$ billion)



Source: Pira International Ltd

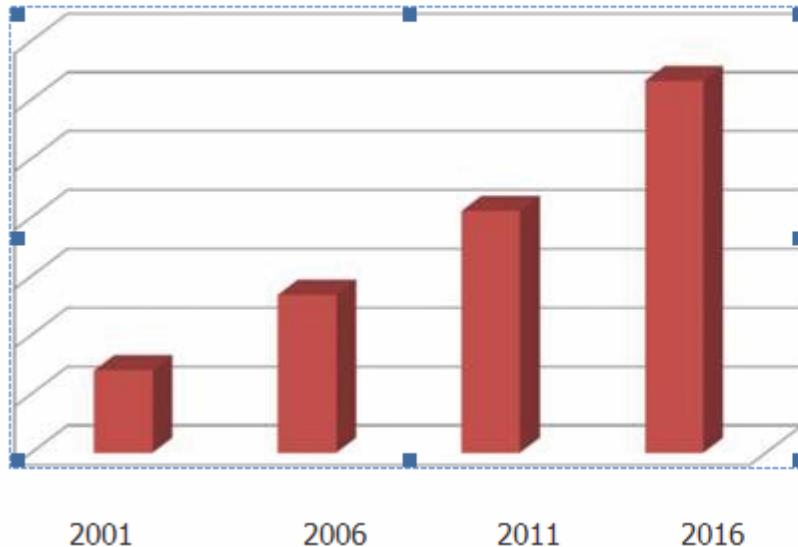


Global Spunlaced Technology Markets and Trends 2011-2016

Purchase!

Rapid global growth of spunlaced/hydroentanglement technology and end-uses

Outlook for Worldwide Spunlaced Nonwoven Production



Cost

INDA Members: \$1,995
Non-Members: \$2,795

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Minnesota city sues makers of 'flushable' wipes over clogged sewers

April 25, 2015

The city of Wyoming, Minn., is suing six makers of wet wipes, arguing that so-called “flushable” wipes are clogging plumbing networks and costing the city big money.

The lawsuit, filed Thursday in federal court, might be the first seeking class-action status on behalf of cities grappling with the disposable cloths that wastewater officials say are plugging pipes and pumps.

“These flushable wipes do not degrade after flushing,” the city of Wyoming’s suit says. “Rather, the flushable wipes remain intact long enough to pass through private wastewater drain pipes into the municipal sewer line, causing clogs and other issues for municipal and county sewer systems and wastewater treatment plants, resulting in thousands, if not millions, of dollars of damages.”

Minnesota city sues makers of 'flushable' wipes

But representatives of the industry behind wet wipes argue that **people are flushing cloths that never claimed to be flushable**, such as cheap baby wipes, meant to be bundled in disposable diapers and thrown in the trash.

That industry has “empathy for the challenges the wastewater operators are having with nonflushable materials impacting their systems,” said Dave Rousse, president of the Association of Nonwoven Fabrics Industry, a trade group representing manufacturers of wipes and other products. “However, we take great exception to any effort to blame flushable wipes for the problems being caused by nonflushable wipes.”

Makers of wipes — including baby, facial and cleaning wipes — have faced increased criticism as their industry has grown. In 2014, a New York man sued Kimberly-Clark Corp. and Costco Wholesale Corp. in federal court with a class-action-styled complaint that featured “homeowner horror stories” of “flushable” wipes clogging homes’ plumbing.

Minnesota city sues makers of 'flushable' wipes

But until now, cities have not brought forward such a suit, said Garrett Blanchfield, a partner at Reinhardt Wendorf & Blanchfield in Minneapolis, representing Wyoming, population 7,800.

In its lawsuit, Wyoming is seeking “a declaration that the defendants’ **flushable wipes do not degrade and are not sewer safe,**” an order that the **companies stop advertising them as such,** and the establishment of a fund to compensate cities for the costs of cleaning and removing wipes from their sewer systems.

“They want to make sure that people know that these things really aren’t flushable,” Blanchfield said.

A spokesman for Kimberly-Clark, one of the companies named in Wyoming’s suit, declined to comment on the litigation. But the company does “extensive testing” on the wipes it calls “flushable,” said Bob Brand, director of external communications for the Texas-based company. They include Kleenex Cottonelle FreshCare, which it labels with the words “SafeFlush Technology,” beside an image of a wipe going down a toilet. “Our wipes do break down,” Brand said.

Minnesota city sues makers of 'flushable' wipes

Across Minnesota and the country, cities have been cautioning residents not to flush wipes, which have forced them to boost their monitoring and buy expensive grinders. Wadena, MN, posted its warning on Facebook: **A wipe labeled flushable “only means they will fit down the piping within your home.”**

But down the line, wipes can catch on joints and tree roots, cities say. They wind around pumps at lift stations, which bring wastewater to higher elevations, get caught in screens and form massive clumps so common that they earned a nickname: polar bears.

Linda White, who has a house in Wadena County, was struck by Wadena's warning. “I think **people really do need to be educated** on why they should not be flushing them into the septic systems,” she said. “I was shocked at how expensive it was to the city of Wadena to take care of this problem.”

Flushable Wipes Class Action Lawsuit Investigation

By Top Class Actions , August 20, 2015

A flushable wipes class action settlement could include awards for reimbursement for product purchases and/or repair bills for clogged sewer and toilet flooding damage.

Products that may qualify include but are not limited to:

- Babyganics® flushable wipes
- Charmin Freshmates
- CVS flushable wipes
- Equate® flushable wipes by Wal-Mart
- Kandoo® flushable wipes by Pampers
- Up & Up® flushable wipes by Target
- Walgreens flushable wipes
- Other flushable wipe products

Bismarck Public Education and Community Involvement

- Presentations
- Brochures
- Partnerships
- Media Relations: Radio and Newspaper
- Videos
- Face to Face
- Social Media: Twitter, Facebook
- School Education: Environmental Festival (5th grade), Water Festival (3rd grade)
- Door hanger

Types of Public Education and Outreach Performed

- * News Releases
- * Information on Water Bill
- * Water Bill Insert
- * Internet Web Site
- * Newspaper – Bismarck Tribune
- * Public Notice
- * Télévision
- * Facebook
- * Twitter

Post on Facebook

February 23, 2015
Don't Flush Trouble!

The City of Bismarck is experiencing an increase in wastewater pump station malfunctions in certain areas of the City and we need help from Bismarck residents. Crews are regularly unclogging mounds of rags and wipes from pumps, at considerable expense, and there is the very real potential for the environmental consequence of raw sewage backing up into yours or a neighbor's basement.

...Sometimes we forget the toilet is not a trash can. All wipes and disposable cleaning products belong in the trash, not the toilet. Did you know flushing wipes down the toilet can cause problems in your home and in the City's sewer system? "Disposable" wipes may be labeled flushable, but they can clog the sewer system, contributing to costly cleanups and may result in basement sewer backups. Read on:

<http://www.bismarcknd.gov/civicalerts.aspx?AID=3638>



Home + SHARE Print RSS

- Industrial Pre-Treatment Program
- Sewer Back-Ups
- Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Tree Roots in Your Line
- What Not to Flush

Bids & RFPs	Report a Concern	Jobs
How Are We Doing?	Online Services	Maps

You are here: Home > Departments > Public Works > Sewage > What Not to Flush

What Not to Flush

Fats, oils and grease (FOG) - should never be poured down the sink, garbage disposal or toilet. FOG sticks to the interior surface of the sewer pipes, hardens over time and eventually may cause sewage to backup and lead to a sewage spill in your home or on our streets. Running hot water as you pour the grease down the drain will not help either. Many people are unaware that pouring hot water and detergent down the drain only breaks up grease temporarily. Pour grease into a can (an empty coffee can works great). Keep it in the refrigerator so the grease can cool/harden, and then dispose of it in the trash. Remember to put FOG where it belongs.

Bathroom wipes - which sometimes are advertised as flushable, are not, sewer officials insist. Neither are tissues, paper towels, feminine hygiene products, make-up pads, various medical materials, condoms and dental floss. Paper towels, diapers, baby wipes and facial tissues are made of materials that don't break down easily and can cause all pipes to clog. Even if a large object like a diaper makes it to the sewer main (if you're that lucky) they can cause blockages in the sewer main and can cause city pumps to fail. The trash is the place for these items.

- [Don't Flush Trouble Public Service Announcement 30 sec.](#)
- [Don't Flush Trouble Public Service Announcement 60 sec.](#)

Food - should not be flushed down the sink. Use a drain screen in your sink to catch any remaining bits of food as you wash the dishes. Use your garbage disposal sparingly. Using the drain as a dump will have unforeseen consequences of clogging sewer lines and possible backups in your home. Never use your garbage disposal as a substitute for the trash can. Scrape grease and food scraps from trays, plates, pots, pans, utensils, grills and cooking surfaces into a can or the trash for disposal. Be especially careful with pasta, potatoes, and other starchy foods. Starch and water make paste, which can plug pipes. Be even more careful with what goes down the kitchen drain if you don't have a garbage disposal. Another way to get rid of food is to compost what you can and wipe or scrape the remnants in the trash.

Never dump kitty litter down the drain - many of these products contain clay which will narrow the opening of your sewer pipe. Eventually it may plug your sewer pipe.

Coffee grounds and eggshells - should be properly disposed of in the trash. Never put them in the garbage disposal. Crushed eggshells and coffee grounds can also be used for making garden compost

Hair - always seems to make its way past the plug. Hair will catch and stick to other items and is very difficult to get out of piping once it gets in. Keep hair from going into the pipes by using a fine drain screen to catch hair in your bathtub and shower and dispose of it properly in the trash.

Home + SHARE Print RSS

Industrial Pre-Treatment Program

Sewer Back-Ups

Wastewater Treatment Plant

Tree Roots in Your Line

What Not to Flush

 Bids & RFPs	 Report a Concern	 Jobs
 How Are We Doing?	 Online Services	 Maps

You are here: Home > Departments > Public Works > Sewage > Sewer Back-Ups

Sewer Back-Ups

Emergency

After Hours Emergency
Ph: (701) 355-1700, Option1

Purpose

This policy will establish the conditions under which the City of Bismarck will pay for the cost of damages resulting from blockages in the sanitary sewer system.

Policy

The City of Bismarck, through its Sanitary Sewer Utility, will pay for the cost of cleanup and reimbursement for property damages resulting from sanitary sewer backups that are a result of an obstruction or blockage in the City sewer main. Damages that result from blockages or deficiencies in private sewer service lines or private sewer mains are not covered by this policy.

The City will pay for actual cleanup and restoration costs and actual present cash value for any personal property damage resulting from such sewer backups. The property owner must file a damage claim with the City Attorney's office and provide documentation to support the claim.

The cost of claims will be paid for from an account funded by the establishment of a surcharge on the monthly sewer bill for all commercial and residential properties. The initial charge will be \$1.00 per month per commercial account and \$0.50 per month for residential accounts. The charge shall be reviewed annually and adjusted as necessary by the Board of City Commissioners.

Acceptance or payment of a claim by the City is not an admission of liability or negligence on behalf of the City. Payment of a claim is not determined under principles of negligence or legal responsibility but rather is a payout from a fund that is collected by the City to relieve the financial burden that may be caused by sewer backups.

Don't Flush Trouble

Did you know flushing wipes down the toilet can cause problems in your home and in the City's sewer system? "Disposable" wipes may be labeled flushable, but they can clog the sewer system, contributing to costly cleanups and may result in basement sewer backups.

View these videos to learn more!

[Don't Flush Trouble Public Service Announcement 30 sec.](#)

[Don't Flush Trouble Public Service Announcement 60 sec.](#)

[Holiday entertaining can lead to plugged sewer lines](#)

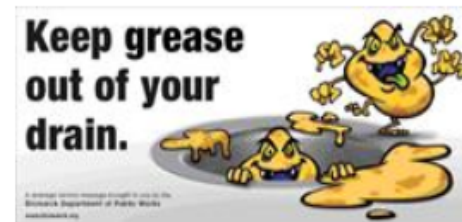


Household Users

How to Fight the Grease Menace

Throw it in the trash, not down the drain! You can significantly minimize your plumbing and sewer problems simply by limiting the things you pour down your drain.

The vast majority of sewer problems start as plumbing troubles inside the house. Most sewer problems result from slow drainage in sinks, floor drains, washer drains, or toilets. In severe cases, there may be a complete blockage and with it an expensive and unpleasant cleanup that must be paid for by the homeowner.



Here are some things you don't want to put down the drain:

- **Never pour grease down sink drains or into toilets!** Too often, grease is washed into the plumbing system, usually through the kitchen sink, which will stick to the inside of sewer pipes. Over time, the grease can build up and block the entire pipe. Pour grease into a can (an empty coffee can works great). Keep it in the refrigerator so the grease can solidify and then dispose of it in the trash.
- **If you are deep frying a turkey**, Bismarck residents can recycle the used oil at the Public Works Dept. (601 S 26th St) during normal office hours. Be sure the oil is in a tightly capped plastic container.
- **Use your garbage disposal sparingly!** Never use your garbage disposal as a substitute for the trash can. Scrape grease and food scraps from trays, plates, pots, pans, utensils, grills and cooking surfaces into a can or the trash for disposal. Be especially careful with pasta, potatoes, and other starchy foods. Starch and water make paste, which can plug pipes. Be even more careful with what goes down the kitchen drain if you don't have a disposal. Put strainers in sink drains to catch food scraps and other solids, and empty the strainers into the trash for disposal.
- **Never flush baby diapers down the toilet!** Even if large objects like this make it to the sewer main (if you're that lucky) they can cause blockages in the sewer main, or plug city pumps.
- **Never plant trees over your sewer service line!** Roots are the leading cause of service line blockages. If you have any roots in your sewer service line, the grease, food waste, and large objects just mentioned are even more likely to cause blockages.
- **Never dump kitty litter down the drain!** Many of these products contain clay which will narrow the opening of your sewer pipe. Eventually it may plug your sewer pipe.
- **Use sewer pipe cleaning chemicals carefully and sparingly!** Follow label instructions closely to avoid dangerous fumes, skin and eye injury, and pipe and fixture damage. Proper care of your home sewer pipes will decrease the need for chemicals. Fats, oils, and greases aren't just bad for your arteries and your waistline; they're bad for sewers, too.

The maintenance of internal plumbing and sewer service lines is the responsibility of the **property owner**. The City is responsible for maintenance of sewer mains only. If sewage is actually flowing into your home through a floor drain, immediately contact the City at (701) 355-1700 because there may be an obstruction in the sewer main.

News Release with Posting on City of Bismarck Website

- * The City of Bismarck needs your help in preventing sewer back-ups. Putting the wrong things down sinks and toilets can cause expensive plumbing problems in your home or business and for the City. Do not flush paper towels, cleaning wipes, diapers, nursing pads, baby wipes, facial tissues, cat litter, condoms, tampons and pads, dental floss, hair and grease down the toilet.
- * These products are resistant to degradation and hang up in your pipes and the Cities. The label might say “flushable”, but **disposable products are clogging our sewer pipes and damaging pumps and equipment.** The toilet is only meant to flush the three P’s: Pee, Poop and (toilet) Paper.

NEWS RELEASE Continued

If a large City sewer pipe clogs, it can lead to a sewer back-up in a whole neighborhood. **Don't Flush Trouble, save yourself and your sewer utility from a pain in the drain, put disposable wipes, rags and towels in the trash, not the toilet!**

To learn more, including how to get rid of things you no longer want or need, visit us on the Web at www.bismarcknd.gov or call the Bismarck Wastewater Treatment Plant at 701-355-1760.

Write Up/Blurb on Water Bill

* KEEP WIPES OUT OF PIPES

- * Did you know flushing wipes down the toilet can cause sewer problems in your home and in the City's sewer system? Those “disposable” wipes may be labeled flushable, but they can clog the sewer system and may result in basement backups.

* COMMON OFFENDERS

- * • Paper towels • Cleaning wipes • Facial wipes • Baby wipes • Diapers
- * Many cleaning products are labeled “flushable” but don't dissolve or break down after being flushed. A general guideline is, if it doesn't dissolve as fast as toilet paper, it's not flushable. Sometimes we forget the toilet is not a trash can. All wipes and disposable cleaning products belong in the trash, not the toilet.

Write Up/Blurb on Water Bill

- * If a large City sewer pipe clogs, it can lead to a sewer back-up in a whole neighborhood. Don't Flush Trouble, save yourself and your sewer utility from a pain in the drain, put disposable wipes, rags and towels in the trash, not the toilet!
- * To learn more, including how to get rid of things you no longer want or need, visit us on the Web at www.bismarcknd.gov or call the Bismarck Wastewater Treatment Plant at 701-355-1760.

Water Bill Insert Photo



Kleenex are not toilet paper in a box!

Middle Part of Water Bill Insert

Sometimes we forget the toilet is not a trash can. All wipes and disposable cleaning products belong in the trash, not the toilet.

Did you know flushing wipes down the toilet can cause problems in your home and in the City's sewer system? Those "disposable" wipes may be labeled flushable, but they can clog the sewer system, contributing to costly cleanups and may result in basement backups.

The City is experiencing an increase in wastewater pump station malfunctions in certain areas. Crews are regularly unclogging mounds of rags and wipes from pumps, at considerable expense, and the potential for environmental consequences could be raw sewage backing up into your or a neighbor's basement

Bottom Part of Water Bill Insert

- * KEEP WIPES OUT OF PIPES
COMMON OFFENDERS • Paper towels • Cleaning wipes • Facial wipes • Baby wipes • Diapers • Feminine Hygiene Products

Many cleaning products are labeled “flushable” or “disposable,” but they often don’t dissolve or break down after being flushed.

A general guideline is, if it doesn’t dissolve as fast as toilet paper, it’s not flushable.

We are asking everyone to please do your part and place these materials where they belong: in the trash.

Phone: 701-355-1700 ★ FAX: 701-221-6840 ★ www.bismarck.org ★ 601 S. 26th St.
★ P.O. Box 5503 ★ Bismarck, ND 58506-5503 ★ TDD 711
An Equal Opportunity-Affirmative Action Employer

Write Up/Blurb on Water Bill March 2015

Help! Tissues, paper towels, feminine products, wipes and trash are plugging our sewers! This cost residents and the city of Bismarck a lot of money. Products may say “flushable”, but when flushed they are causing sewer blockage problems. **Don't Flush Trouble; Use the trash, not the toilet!**

For more information visit
www.bismarcknd.gov/publicworks, select Sewage and
What Not to Flush.

Message: Keep it Simple

Sticker Development

If it is not toilet paper,
it shouldn't be flushed!



A message from the
Portland Water District

PLEASE FLUSH
ONLY TOILET
PAPER AND WHAT
NATURE PROVIDES



~~DO NOT~~ THROW

TRASH OR PAPER
TOWELS IN ~~TOILET~~

TRASH CAN

USE THE TRASH CAN
NOT THE TOILET FOR



- DISPOSABLE
- DIAPERS
- CLEANING WIPES
- FACIAL WIPES
- BABY WIPES
- TAMPONS
- SANITARY PADS
- ~~CONDOMS~~

DO NOT THROW
TRASH OR PAPER
TOWELS IN TOILET



NO ARROJE BASURA
NI TOALLAS DE PAPEL
EN EL INODORO

Bisman Logo

PLEASE
DO NOT FLUSH:

- PAPER TOWELS
- CLEANING WIPES
- FACIAL WIPES
- BABY WIPES
- DIAPERS
- TRASH
- FEMININE HYGIENE PRODUCTS



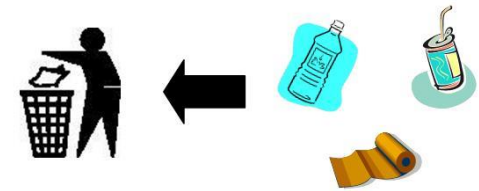
Thank you



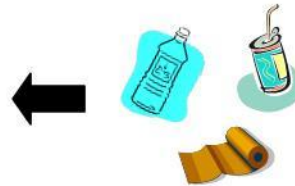
P

PLEASE
DO NOT
FLUSH...

- Paper towels
- Cleaning wipes
- Facial wipes
- Baby wipes
- Diapers
- Trash
- Feminine hygiene products



Thank you!



WHAT GOES WHERE...

TRASH CAN

- ◆ Paper towels
- ◆ Baby wipes
- ◆ Diapers
- ◆ Tampons
- ◆ Sanitary pads
- ◆ Cleaning wipes

TOILET

- ◆ Pee
- ◆ Poop
- ◆ Toilet paper

**USE THE TRASH CAN
NOT THE TOILET FOR**

**PAPER TOWELS
CLEANING WIPES
FACIAL WIPES
BABY WIPES
DIAPERS
FEMININE -
HYGIENE PRODUCTS**

**USE THE TRASH CAN,
NOT THE TOILET FOR:**

PAPER TOWELS
CLEANING WIPES
FACIAL WIPES
BABY WIPES
DIAPERS
FEMININE HYGIENE PRODUCTS



Thank you for your cooperation!

**PLEASE,
DO NOT FLUSH:**

**PAPER TOWELS
CLEANING WIPES
FACIAL WIPES
BABY WIPES
DIAPERS
FEMININE -
HYGIENE PRODUCTS**



USE THE TRASH CAN, NOT THE TOILET FOR:

PAPER TOWELS
CLEANING WIPES
FACIAL WIPES
BABY WIPES
DIAPERS
FEMININE HYGIENE PRODUCTS



Thank you for your cooperation!

www.bismarcknd.gov

In 2014, Bismarck printed 10,000 of these adhesive stickers and distributed ~7,000.

City of Bismarck Logo

City of Bismarck
web site

Display of Public Educational Stickers on Public Bathroom Mirrors and towel Dispensers at:

Hospitals

City Schools and Colleges

Long Term Care & Child Care Facilities

Shopping Malls & Grocery Stores

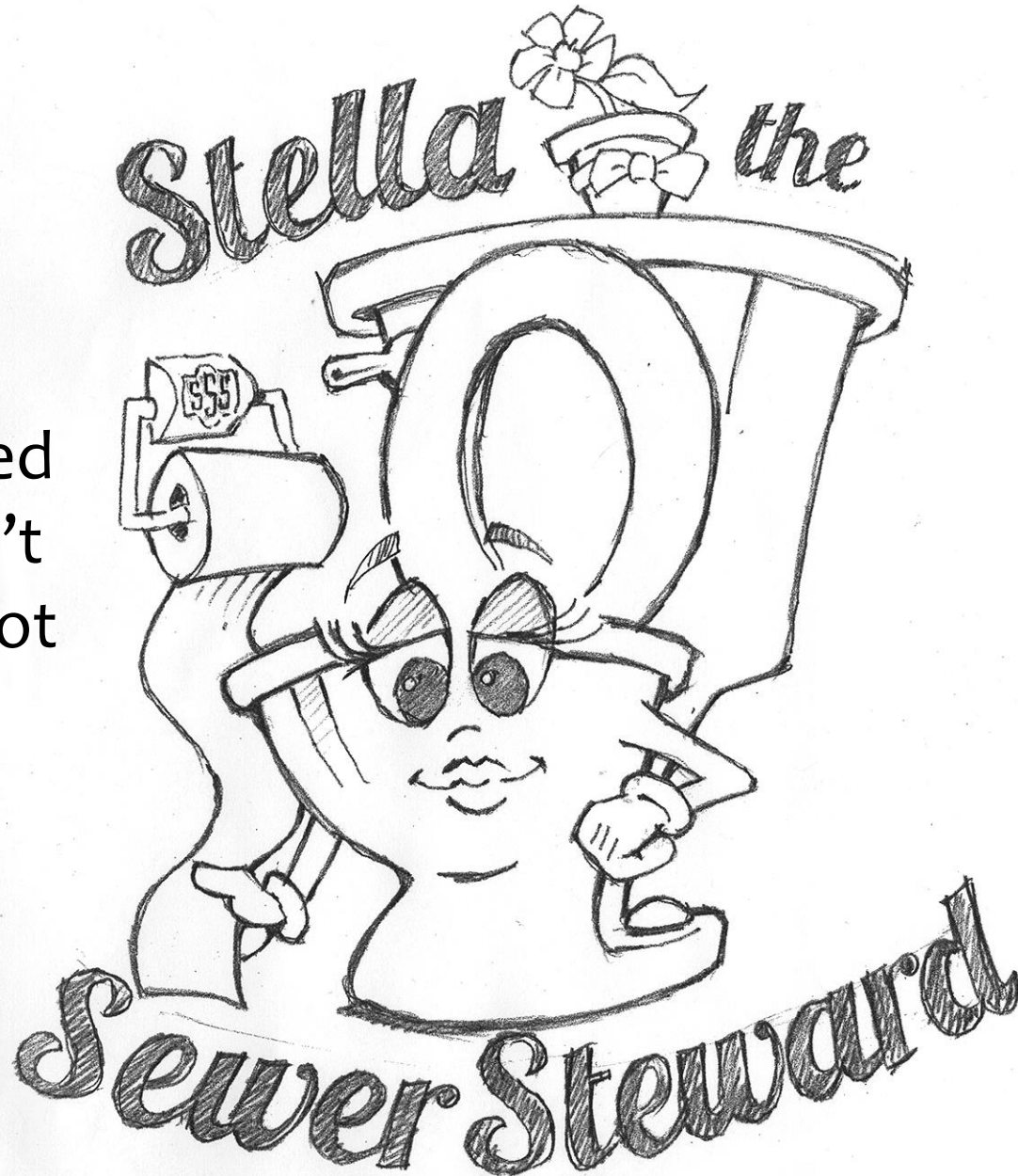
Food Service Establishments

Commercial Facilities

Large Apartment Complexes

City, State and Federal Buildings

Initial door
hanger draft
with Stella.
It was decided
that we didn't
need a mascot



If it doesn't come
off the roll,
don't throw
it in the
bowl.



It's a TOILET, not a trash can!

Use the **trash can** for:



- paper towels
- cleaning wipes
- facial wipes
- baby wipes
- diapers
- feminine products

If it doesn't come
off the roll,
don't throw
it in the
bowl.



The City of Bismarck Needs your **HELP!**

Bismarck has been seeing a higher than normal accumulation of paper towels and disposable cleaning products in the sewer pipes in your neighborhood which could lead to sewer backups.

Keep Wipes out of Pipes

Sometimes we forget the toilet is not a trash can. All wipes and disposable cleaning products belong in the trash, not the toilet. Did you know flushing wipes and paper products down the toilet can cause problems in your home and in the City's sewer system? Those "disposable" wipes may be labeled flushable, but they can clog the sewer system, contributing to costly cleanups, and may result in backup of sewage into your basement or your neighbor's. Most products labeled "flushable" or "disposable" often don't dissolve or breakdown after being flushed.



How You Can Help

A general guideline is, if it doesn't dissolve as fast as toilet paper, it's not flushable. We are asking everyone to please do your part and place these materials where they belong: in the **trash**.



For more information go to
www.bismarcknd.gov
or call **355-1700**.

2014 Public Education Costs

Grease Scraper		\$1,000.55	Dakota Awards	1000		\$1.00
Stickers	DNF	\$613.38	Dakota Awards	2000	large	\$0.31
Stickers	DNF	\$613.38	Dakota Awards	2000	large	\$0.31
Stickers	DNF	\$613.91	Dakota Awards	2000	large	\$0.31
Stickers	DNF	\$1,041.78	Dakota Awards	4000	small	\$0.26
FOG brochure		\$882.95	Image Printing	2000		\$0.44
	Total	\$4,765.95				

2015 Public Education Costs

Water Bill Insert		\$850.00	The Printers	2/15	20,000
Stickers	DNF	\$1,047.06	Dakota Awards	7/2/2015	4000
Stickers	DNF	\$113.00	Printers	7/14/2015	5000
DNF door hanger design		\$225.00	Image Printing	9/14/2015	
DNF door hanger		\$865.86	Image Printing	9/10/2015	10,000
Nondispersible	Total	\$3,100.92			
Grease Scraper		\$1,875.00	Dakota Awards	7/24/2015	2500
Public Education Total		\$4,975.92			

Bismarck Lift Station Pump Blockages

2015 – 33 through August

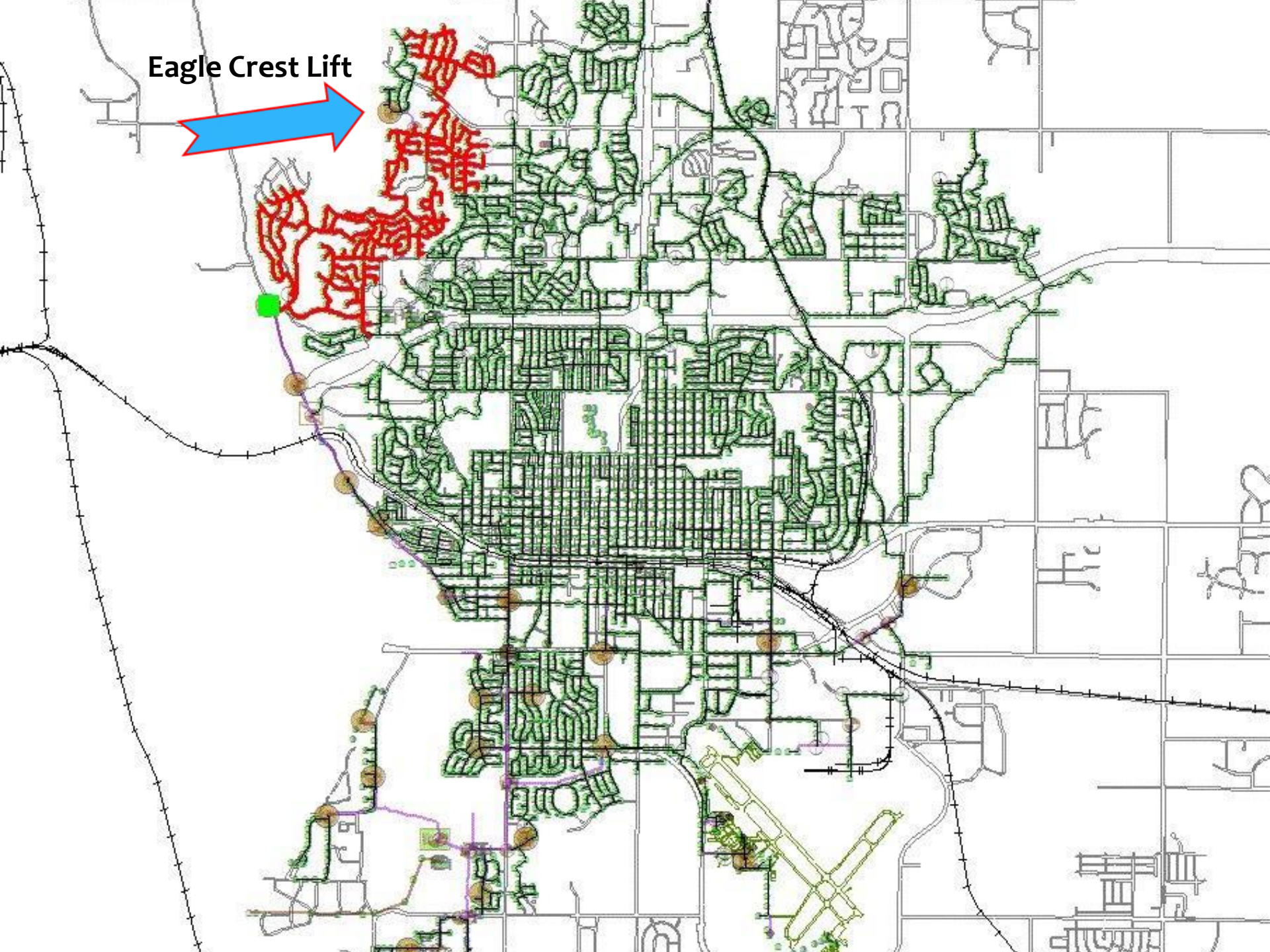
2014 – 82

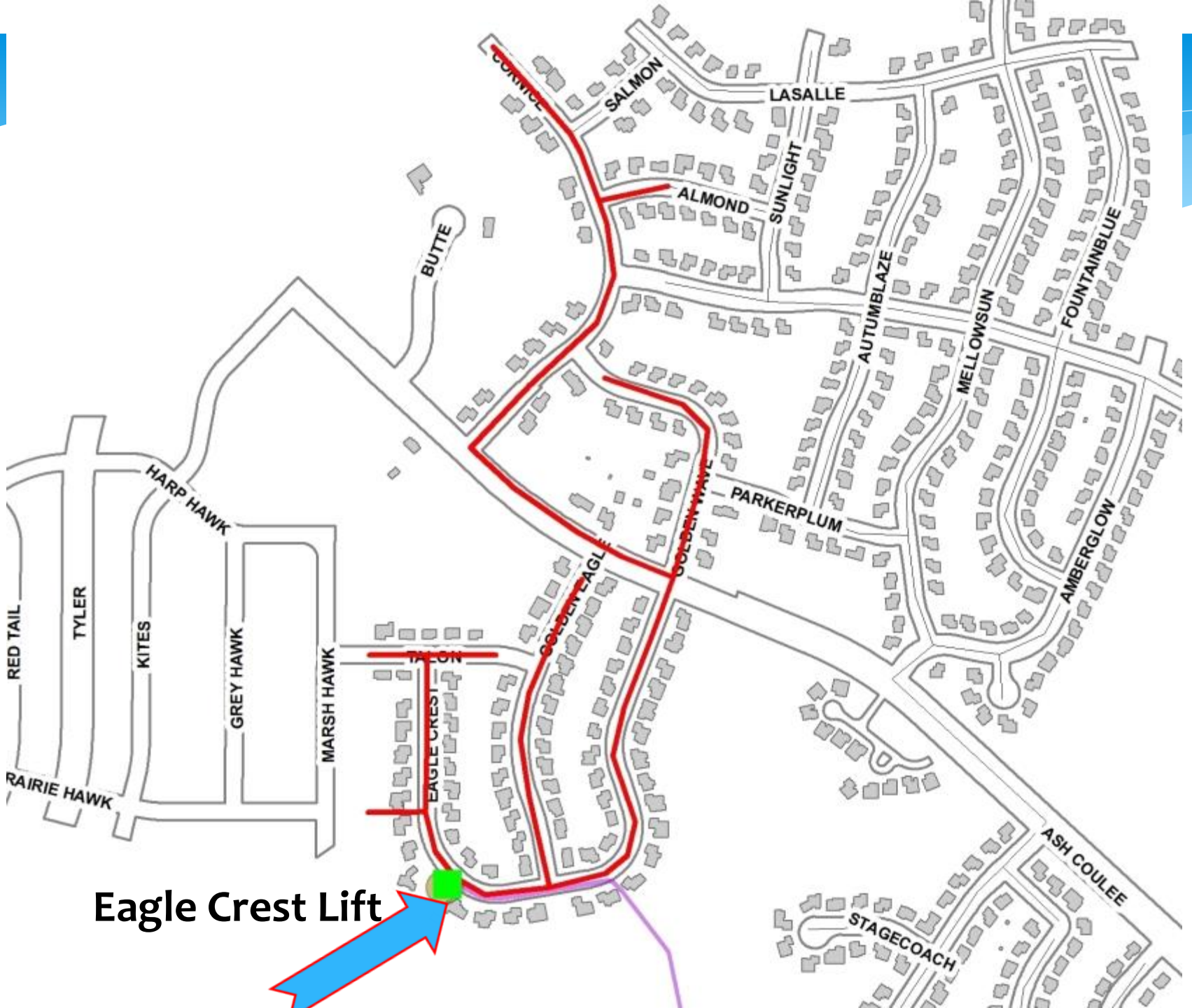
2013 – 70

2012 – 58

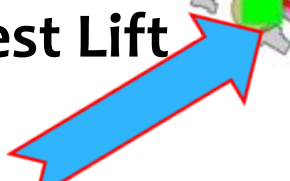
Lift Station Plugs	2015	2014	2013	2012	Total
Billings & Reno	5	12	2	1	20
Eagle Crest	7	6	18	11	42
HayCreek	2	27	10	5	44
Manchester	1	1	1		3
Northern Plains CC	1			1	2
Old Airport		1		1	2
Southport				1	1
Southwood	3	14	16	13	46
Tatley		3	2	2	7
Washington St.	7	9			16
Wachter 7	7	9	21	23	60
Total	33	82	70	58	243

Eagle Crest Lift





Eagle Crest Lift



30 Sec. Video Version

Help! Tissues, paper towels, feminine products, wipes & trash are plugging our sewers!

This costs residents and the City of Bismarck a lot of money.

See how much trash is pulled from our pump stations every day! Products may say “flushable,” but when flushed cause sewer blockage problems.

Don't Flush Trouble, Use the trash not the toilet!

For more information visit bismarcknd.gov/publicworks or call the Bismarck Wastewater Treatment Plant at 701-355-1760.

90 Second Version

The City of Bismarck needs your help in preventing sewer back-ups. Flushing the wrong things down the toilet can cause expensive plumbing problems in your home or business and for the City.

Do not flush paper towels, cleaning wipes, baby wipes, facial tissues, diapers and feminine hygiene products down the toilet. These products don't easily break down, are resistant to degradation and hang up in pipes.

At our sewage pumping stations, Public Works employees have to spend extra time to remove trash from our sewers. The label might say "flushable", but disposable products are clogging our sewer pipes and damaging pumps and equipment.

As you see from testing, toilet paper disintegrates after only a few seconds. So-called "flushable" wipes, don't break down after 20 min or even several weeks. Paper towels, wet wipes and facial tissues belong in the trash can. The toilet is only meant to flush human waste and toilet paper.

Don't Flush Trouble, save yourself and your sewer utility from a pain in the drain, put disposable wipes, rags and towels in the trash, not the toilet!

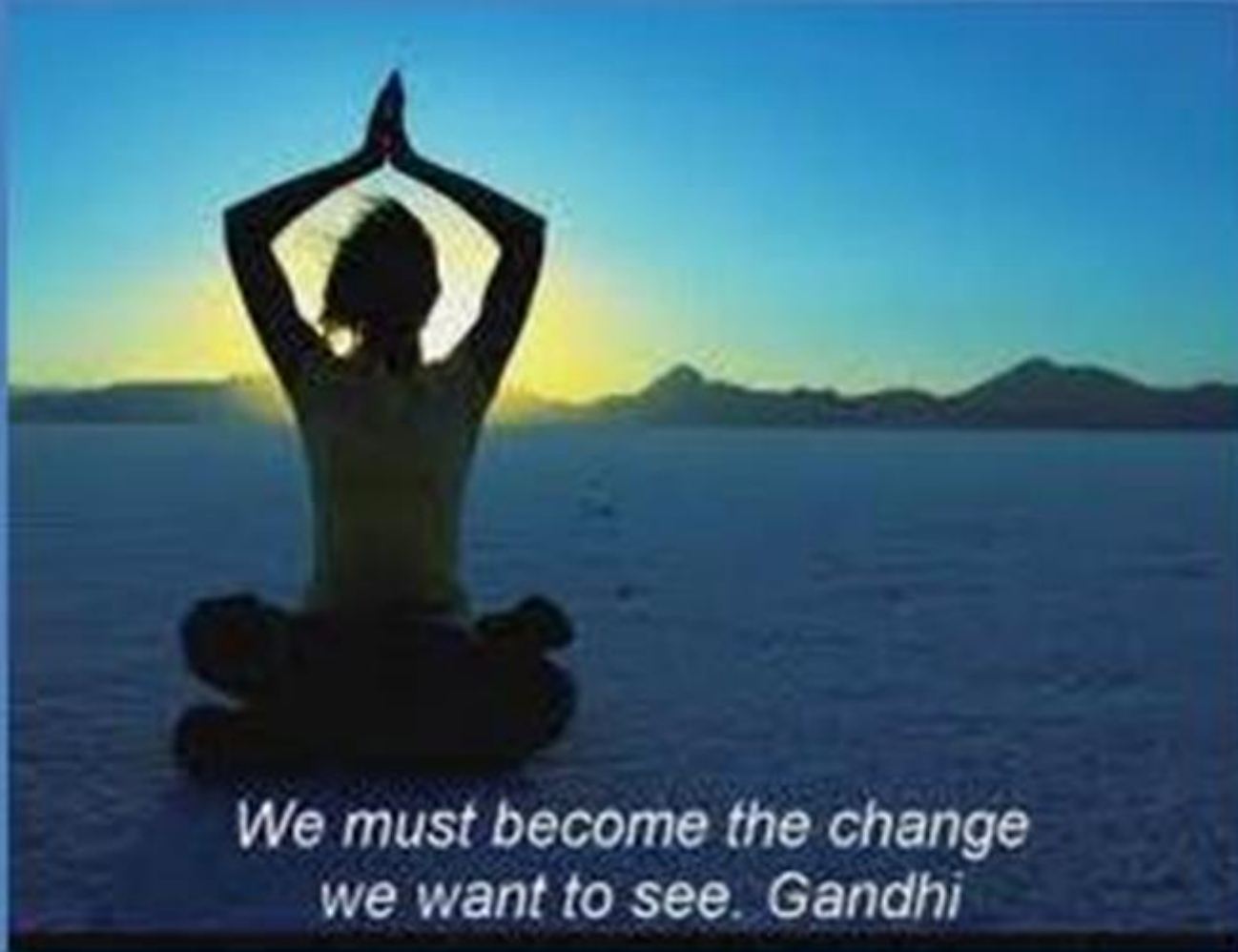
Conclusion

Use the garbage can, not the toilet to dispose of wipes and paper towels.

Provide public education, to help consumers recognize what's flushable and what's not flushable.

To change an established consumer behavior they will need to hear it numerous times.

Questions ???



*We must become the change
we want to see. Gandhi*