

# Don't Flush It and Forget It!



**Protect your health and our environment...only flush acceptable substances down the drain!**

**Most people give very little thought to waste water once it has left their home, office, shop or factory. With a little more care and thought about how we dispose of our waste we can greatly improve the effectiveness of our drainage and sewer systems.**

## **TO FLUSH OR NOT TO FLUSH...**

The Brighton Sewer District has received numerous calls over the years about sewers backing up in homes and businesses. This brochure is meant to be a guideline to residents about the role they play in preventing this occurrence.

To many people, once something has gone down the toilet, it's out of sight and out of mind. You have probably never thought about it, and you are not alone.

### **What is sewage?**

Sewage is the used water and wastes discharged by a community. Sewage is collected from the drains of sinks, showers, toilets, laundry facilities, etc. Sewage comes from the drains in homes and businesses, into the sewer lines (or "collection system"), and is then transported to a sewage treatment facility.

### **What causes sewers to back up?**

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

### **Why should I care if the sewer backs up?**

Sewage back ups are very costly, messy, stinky, and pose a serious threat to the health and safety of people and animals. Infectious diseases can be transmitted from raw sewage resulting in serious illnesses or even death.

### **What CAN I flush down the toilet?**

Only feces, urine, and toilet paper should be flushed down the toilet. Other drains should only be used to dispose of used water and soaps from washing or cleaning activities

### **What CAN'T I flush down the toilet?**

You cannot flush anything down the drain that could clog the sewer collection system or could damage the sewage treatment facility. This includes:

- ✓ Fats, oils or greases.
- ✓ Big chunks of garbage, sand, metals, wood, straw or grass, wastepaper, plastics, toys, animal parts, goldfish, glass, cat litter (including so called "flushable" cat litter), disposable diapers, sanitary napkins, tampons (including tampon applicators), other bulky so called "disposable" products, or similar substances.
- ✓ Corrosive substances, either acidic or caustic.
- ✓ Rainwater and storm water; foundation drains, sump pumps, roof drains, etc.
- ✓ Flammable or explosive liquids, solids, or gases. Anti-freeze or coolant, brake fluid, transmission fluid and other automotive chemicals.
- ✓ Paint, stains, wood preservatives, solvents, sealants and thinners
- ✓ Any substance that is toxic to the treatment facilities or workers in the facilities.

- ✓ Poisons and hazardous waste
- ✓ Anything radioactive.
- ✓ Fertilizer, herbicides, pesticides, insecticides.
- ✓ Medical equipment and medicines (see below)

## **Why can't I flush these things down the drain?**

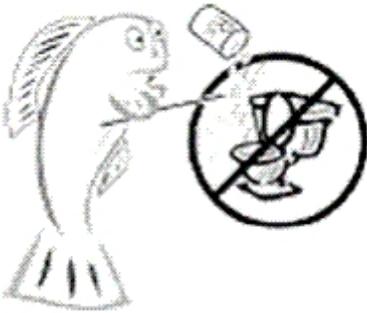
The above types of materials can cause clogs in the sewer lines or damage to the collection system or treatment facility. They may also pose safety threats to citizens and sewer workers. Some of the prohibited substances are not readily removed in the sewage treatment process, and therefore pose a threat to water quality when discharged with the facilities effluent. ("Effluent" means the treated water from a sewage treatment facility that is discharged into the lake, river, or groundwater.)

## **Why should I care what happens to the sewage treatment facility?**

A sewage treatment facility is publicly owned, which means we all pay for the associated costs. Proper sewage treatment is vital in protecting everyone from water borne diseases and protecting the environment from pollution. This important job is not cheap! We all pay for it! By following the above guidelines we all contribute to protecting our community's investment and keeping costs as low as possible. Clogs in city sewer lines from grease or other materials cost money to be cleared out. This cost is passed on to everyone in the form of higher taxes and/or higher user fees.

## **What happens if I don't follow the guidelines on what, and what not, to flush?**

Violations of the town code concerning prohibited materials in the sewage collection system could lead to prosecution, fines and conviction of a misdemeanor.



Everyday, unwanted or expired medicine is disposed of via indoor drains—down the sink or in the toilet. Antibiotics, antidepressants and hormone medications are found in waterways nationwide. While scientists worldwide study the potential impacts on humans and marine life, action by residents and businesses will minimize these impacts. The Brighton Sewer District is seeking to reduce the amount of prescription or over the counter drugs disposed of in wastewater. That's because wastewater treatment plants are designed to remove conventional pollutants, such as human wastes and other biodegradable organic materials, from waters. They were not designed to remove even low concentrations of synthetic pollutants, such as pharmaceuticals. Wastewater treatment plants will remove some drugs, but it is better if they are not disposed down the drain in the first place. The best choice for environmentally-friendly disposal is to take unwanted medicine to a collection location or return them to the pharmacy. If you can not find a location to take them, dispose of medicine in the trash to keep these pollutants out of wastewater.

We hope this guideline helps everyone prevent sewage backups! Please feel free to call our office if you have any further questions or concerns at 585-784-5282.