

# Two Rivers Water Reclamation Authority

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To all Residents served by Two Rivers Water Reclamation Authority:

The shortage of toilet paper is indirectly causing the number and severity of sewer blockages across the country to spike and Two Rivers is no exception. As described in the attached article below :

COLUMBUS, Ohio – Sewer officials are urging homebound, toilet paper-strapped residents to think twice before flushing other materials down their commodes.

That goes for paper towels, tissues, napkins and the bane of many sewer systems, supposedly flushable wipes.

“They are not flushable, and they are not biodegradable,” said Stephen Renner, director of the Department of Sanitary Engineering in Franklin County, Ohio. “They wreak havoc in our system. ... Please don’t flush those down the toilet.”

Each toilet flush heads from home piping to a community's pipes, pumps and grinders for eventual treatment.

The system accommodates toilet paper, which is made to disintegrate quickly in water. But wipes, diapers and other materials, which don’t break down as readily, tend to clog pipes.

That could mean sewer backups into the homes of the perpetrators or of others, as clogs form down the line. The latter often require jet cleaning to clear.

**Police:** Stop calling 911 if you ran out of toilet paper

Renner said his county sewer system is seeing an increase in volume, which was expected given the number of people staying in their homes as part of efforts to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

“It’s to everybody’s benefit to use toilet paper only,” he said.



*“Setting The Standard In Water Reclamation”*

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# Wipes might be able to flush, but then the 'unseen problems begin'

While disposable wipes are a convenient and easy-to-use product that serve a variety of helpful purposes, many Americans may be using them incorrectly.

Whether it's flushing a nonflushable wipe or using antibacterial products to excess, misusing disposable wipes can create costly "fatbergs," a term used for masses of waste that clog a sewer system.

If manufacturers deem a product unsafe to go down the drain, it more than likely will be labeled on the packing.

While there is debate over whether wipes labeled as "flushable" are truly safe for sewers, nonflushable products like baby wipes, wet wipes and disinfectant wipes are for your trash can.



"All wipes will easily flush down your toilet, but that's where the unseen problems begin," said Mike Saia, a communications manager at Charleston Water System in South Carolina.

Saia said problems occur because as customers flush the wipes, they are often covered in grease, oil, hair and waste, which coat them in a thick layer of grim and hinder them from breaking down.



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"It creates ropelike clumps that have incredible strength," Saia said. When those clumps reach a choke point, they can completely disrupt the system.

"Flushable wipes" can get through your toilet but get stuck in your pipes or in the pipes serving you and your neighbors. That creates a blockage that can back up into you and your neighbor's home. We have had staff in the sewers clearing blockages since the pandemic broke out clearing flushable wipes. Other Authorities have had pumps stations clog and require staff to remove those pumps with large cranes. The cost of the repairs are unnecessary and impactful but requiring people to enter sewers to remove your wipes, with direct flow from COVID-19 patients sewers is frightening.

Please do your part and don't flush anything that doesn't belong in the sewer. Everything you put in; we have to get back out. If you have it out keep it out.

Thank you for your help.

Michael A. Gianforte PE  
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