

GRINDER PUMP SYSTEMS

Your home may be equipped with a grinder pump system. This is a low pressure sewer system which grinds and pumps sewage into the sewer system from your yard.

WHERE IS MY GRINDER PUMP SYSTEM?

- If your home is equipped with a grinder pump system, you will have a large manhole cover in your front yard with a fiberglass control panel on a short pole next to it. The grinder pump and tank are located underground. The control box has a red alarm light on the top which should be visible from the street.



HOW DOES IT WORK?

- The grinder pump is designed to grind and pump domestic sewage. The grinder pump consists of a pump assembly with an integral sewage grinder and shredder device. However, "flushable" items will clog the shredding device by wrapping around the blades. When the water in the tank reaches a certain level, the motor starts and runs, the grinder pulverizes any solids and the slurry is then pumped until the liquid in the tank is lowered to the shut-off level.
- In the event of a pump failure, a high liquid level in the basin activates an alarm indicator (light and/or buzzer.) This is an indication of a potential pump problem and you should contact the District right away.

THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR GRINDER SYSTEM

- When the pump is running you may hear a humming or whirring sound coming from your basin. This sound is normal.
- If your home has lost power, your pump and alarm system will not work. Avoid water usage to prevent sewage back-up or spillage. If the power will be out for prolonged periods, you may need to have this tank pumped out by a septic service or the District.



- If alarm activates frequently it may be a result of high flow. This means that the incoming flow is greater than the pump can handle. You may have a toilet running or even a leak. If the alarm activates continuously it means a high basin level is occurring.
- An extremely noisy pump may be an indication of potential problem. There may be something stuck in the pump or it may be malfunctioning.

**CONTACT THE DISTRICT IMMEDIATELY
USING THE PHONE NUMBERS BELOW IF:**

- The red light and/or buzzer are on (even intermittently); or
- The pump is making an excessive amount of noise.

**WORKING HOURS - 512.266.1111, EXT. 10
AFTER HOURS – EMERGENCY 512.537.8302**



WHAT CAN I DO TO ENSURE PROPER WORKING CONDITIONS FOR MY SYSTEM?

- DO NOT FLUSH BABY WIPES AT ANY TIME – THEY ARE NOT "FLUSHABLE" even if the package says they are.
- DO NOT FLUSH feminine products, napkins, paper towels, swiffer duster covers, q-tips, kitty litter, handy wipes, or diapers.
- DO NOT put eggshells, coffee grounds or grease down garbage disposal or regular drain.
- DO USE LIQUID SOAP for dishwashing and laundry instead of powder to help maintain a dependable system.
- Flushing foreign objects may damage the pump and could void the warranty.

WHAT SHOULD I DO WHEN GOING ON VACATION OR OUT OF TOWN?

- NEVER disconnect or turn off power to pump controls.
- Check all commodes and faucets for water leaks.
- Have a neighbor watch for alarm light on control panel.
- If you are leaving for more than a week, it is recommended to put eight ounces of enzymes down each toilet and flush before you leave. This will help reduce grease and build up. Enzymes can be purchased at most stores, Home Depot, HEB, etc., in the form of Rid X or septic tank treatment.

**Reclaimed water is safe for the
irrigation of Golf Courses, Parks,
Playgrounds, and Landscape**

This information is for customers connected to WCID 17 central wastewater systems only. Customers with septic systems are responsible for the operation and maintenance of their own septic system.



WASTEWATER INFORMATION

**Travis County Water Control and
Improvement District No.17**

3812 Eck Lane Austin, Texas 78734

512.266.1111

www.wcid17.org

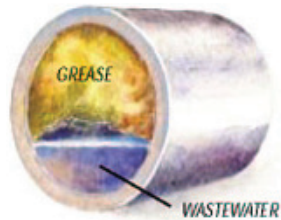


A FAT-FREE WASTEWATER SYSTEM

How to Prevent Fats, Oils and Greases from Damaging Your Home and the Environment

Fats, oil and greases are not just bad for your arteries and your waistline; they're bad for the wastewater system, too.

Wastewater overflows and backups can cause health hazards, damage home interiors and threaten the environment. A common cause of overflow is collection pipe blockage by grease. Grease gets into the pipe from household drains as well as from poorly maintained grease traps in restaurants. The District has a grease trap maintenance program for restaurants. This information is provided to reduce grease load from our residential customers.



Where Does the Grease Come From?

Most of us know grease as the by product of cooking. Grease is found in such things as:

- Meat fats
- Lard
- Cooking Oil
- Shortening
- Butter and Margarine
- Food scraps
- Baking goods
- Sauces
- Dairy products

Too often, grease is washed up into the plumbing system, usually through the kitchen sink. Grease sticks to the insides of collection pipes (both on your property and in the streets.) Over time, the grease can build up and block the entire pipe.

Home garbage disposals do not keep grease out of the plumbing system. These units only shred solid material into smaller pieces and do not prevent grease from going down the drain.

Commercial additives, including detergents that claim to dissolve grease just pass grease on down the line to cause problems there.

THE RESULTS OF TOO MUCH GREASE CAN BE:

- Raw wastewater overflowing in your home or your neighbor's home;
- An expensive and unpleasant cleanup that you must pay for;
- Raw wastewater overflowing into yards, streets and parks;
- Potential contact with disease-causing organisms; and
- Higher operation and maintenance costs for the District which cause high bills for you.



WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP?

The easiest way to solve the grease problem and help prevent overflows of raw wastewater is to keep this material out of the system in the first place.

There are several ways to do this:

- Never pour grease down sink drains or into toilets;
- Scrape grease and food scraps from cooking surfaces into the trash for disposal. Hot grease can cool in a can; and
- Do not put grease down garbage disposals. Put baskets in sink drains to catch food scraps and other solids.



HOW TO PREVENT SEWER BACKUP

- **Call the District at the first sign of a problem—before the sewer backs up.** If your drains are running slow, for example, call us. We'll come and check the lines.
- Never connect sump pumps, French drains or other **flood control systems to your sanitary sewer.** Its illegal and the debris and silt will clog your line.

- Know the location of your clean out cap. The clean out cap is a white plastic cap usually 4 inches in diameter located in your yard.
- Tighten the clean out cap to prevent debris from clogging the pipes.
- Don't plant trees near pipelines; the roots will grow into the pipes causing a backup.
- Get a pop-off valve (similar to the one pictured below here) to minimize damage. A pop-off valve opens automatically to relieve line pressure if there is a backup. They are inexpensive and easy to install. Contact your local plumbing supplier.
- Don't dispose of paper products in the toilet.

Paper towels, baby wipes, disposable (and cloth) diapers, and feminine products cause a great deal of problems in the property owner's line as well as in the main.



Pop Off Valve and Check Valve

These products do not deteriorate quickly, as does bathroom tissue. They become lodged in portions of the lines where there is accumulation of any type of debris, and dam up the line, causing sewer backup.

- Don't put chemicals in the sewer system.

Though they may not clog your sewer line, most chemicals can not only cause damage to your sewer line, they can make it difficult to treat the wastewater as it enters the wastewater treatment plant by damaging expensive equipment and killing waste treatment organisms ultimately leading to higher sewage treatment bills for the customer. These chemicals include:

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| • Antifreeze | • Fuels |
| • Insecticides | • Herbicides |
| • Pesticides | • Hobby Supplies |
| • Cleaners/solvents | • Pool Chemicals |
| • Fertilizers | • Used motor oil |
| • Paint/thinners | |

WHAT TO DO IF THE SEWER IS BACKING UP

- Turn off your dishwasher and washing machine if they are operating.
- Do not flush the commodes.
- Remove the clean out cap located outside in the yard. If little or no water comes out, the problem is likely in the house; contact a plumber. If the water gushes out and then stops, the house is clear and the problem is probably in the line between the house and the street. The District sewer line could also be blocked. Call the District at 512.266.1111 during working hours or the emergency phone at 512.537.8302 after hours, and a crew will be dispatched as quickly as possible.



What if the sewer backs up anyway?

Sewer backups are usually unexpected and always create a mess. At best the backup requires unpleasant cleanup and sometimes expensive damage.

Who is going to fix the problem?

That depends on whether the stoppage is in your private line or the district main. If it is in the district main, we fix it as quickly as possible at no cost to you.

If the problem is with the private line connecting your house to the district main, we'll let you know so you can get it fixed.

Who is going to pay for this?

If the problem is in your private line, you'll have to pay the bill. This is why it is important to make sure your homeowner's insurance covers sewer backups. Don't assume you're covered! You may need a special option for coverage.

Will the District reimburse me for the damage if the backup is in the District's Main?

Only if the District had advance knowledge that the District's main was blocked and didn't fix the problem. The District can only pay for damages under extremely limited circumstances.