

Do Not Call 911 if you are out of Toilet Paper

As global health officials continue to implement restrictions to workers, businesses and other events to stop the spread of the coronavirus COVID-19, keeping your plumbing systems clear helps protect the public's health and protects your investment. Preventing sewer spills is important, especially during this COVID-19 emergency, for the protection of public health and the environment.

The Arizona Onsite Water Reclamation Association (AZOWRA – a group of professionals uniting efforts to improve the onsite wastewater industry in Arizona) is urging toilet paper-strapped residents to think twice before flushing other materials down their commodes. That goes for paper towels, tissues, napkins and supposedly flushable wipes. As the supply of toilet paper and paper goods has become stressed, there is a temptation to purchase and incorporate disposal diapers, pet urinary pads and paper towels cut up to be used as toilet paper.

All sewer and septic systems are designed to accommodate toilet paper, which is made to disintegrate quickly in water. But wipes, paper towels, diapers and other materials, which don't break down as readily, tend to clog pipes and contribute to additional solids in your septic tank. This could also mean sewer backups into the homes of the perpetrators or of others, as clogs form down the line. The latter often require jet cleaning of the pipes, pumping of your system, or system failures requiring costly repairs.

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

Even those wipes marked as "safe" to wash down the toilet can block the passage of water and other materials. If wet wipes make it through the sewer system without causing a problem, they can create problems once they hit the sewage treatment plant. These fibrous wipes can damage and overheat the industrial grade pumps at treatment plants which ultimately cost taxpayers to repair.

We know what you are thinking... "well my brand is labeled "flushable". In that case some brands are less fibrous and stringy than others, and therefore less likely to cause problems. That is simply not the case, to prevent yourself from a costly repair, we recommend avoiding flushing all wipes.

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Sources:

<https://thetoiletzone.com/flushable-wipes/>

https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/are_flushable_bathroom_products_safe_for_sewer_and_septic_systems