



## Community Sewage System

### *Best Practices for Residents*

Did you know? Your home is connected to a sewage system that uses living organisms to decompose and treat the sewage before discharging into the environment. Your everyday actions affect how the system operates. By following these best practices you will keep this sewage system operating effectively, which will help to maintain healthy soil and waterways. You will also protect your home's plumbing, and help to keep your sewage rates to a minimum.

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#### **Best Practice: Only Flush Human Waste and Toilet Paper**

*If these other materials enter the sewage system, they can cause an interruption in the treatment process and unnecessary service expenses.*

#### **DO NOT FLUSH**

Bandages	Food waste, cooking fats or oils
Cat litter	Hair
Condoms	Medications or vitamins
Chemicals such as acids, caustic cleaners, gasoline, oil, paints or solvents	Metal objects
Cigarette filters/butts	Paper towels
Cotton balls	Plastics
Dental floss	Tampons or applicators
Disposables: diapers, sanitary napkins	Wipes ( <i>even those labelled "flushable"</i> ): baby, personal hygiene, cleaning

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#### **Best Practice: Use Less and Choose Safer Soaps and Detergents**

*Soaps and detergents can harm the living organisms that are critical to the sewage treatment process. Using too much of these products is also an unnecessary cost.*

- Avoid liquid fabric softeners as they are toxic to the organisms which break down the sewage.
- Use low-sudsing (e.g. high efficiency), biodegradable laundry detergents.
- Use chlorine-free or hydrogen peroxide bleaches or replace bleach with one cup of baking soda in the wash cycle.
- Use less detergent for washing clothes and dishes. The recommended quantity may often be reduced by up to half without adversely affecting the quality of the wash.

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### **Best Practice: Manage Cooking Fats and Oils**

*Household fats and grease can clog sewage pipes and result in backups and costly repairs.*

- Do not use in-sink garbage disposal units (garburators) or put fats and oils down the drain.
- Wipe excess grease from pots and pans with a paper towel and add this to your food waste; bring to Salish Soils for composting (5800 Black Bear Road, Sechelt).
- Place larger quantities of kitchen grease or fats in a glass jar or old milk carton, then put in the garbage. *Please be wildlife aware and keep garbage inside until pickup time.*

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### **Best Practice: Keep Hazardous Products and Chemicals Away from the Drain**

*Strong chemicals are toxic to the living organisms that break down sewage.*

- Never flush or put acids, caustic cleaners, pesticide, fuel, flammable liquids, solvents or paints (including acrylics and latex wall paints) down the drain.
- Contact the SCR D for information about how to properly dispose of hazardous products.
- To re-use brushes and rollers when painting with water soluble paints:
  - brush/roll excess paint onto absorbent material (e.g. a rag or newspaper) – allow material to dry completely before disposing in the garbage
  - wash brush/roller in a container, then allow residual paints to settle; pour off clear water on a flat or grassy area away from any waterbody
  - ensure residual paint dries completely before disposing of container in the garbage
- Disinfectants and drain cleaners are particularly harmful. Please use boiling water or a drain snake to open a clogged drain.
- Return unused medication or vitamins to your local pharmacy.
- Choose cleaning products that are low in phosphates, chlorine, dyes and perfumes.

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### **Best Practice: Ensure No Excess Water Enters the System**

*Excess water can overload the sewage system. This will reduce the quality of the sewage, impact local ecosystems and shorten the life of the sewage system.*

- Use preventative measures, including adequate insulation, to stop pipes from freezing in the winter – never leave water running.
- Ensure that roof or perimeter drains are not connected to the sewer system. Rock pits and rainwater gardens are two methods that homeowners can use to manage rainwater.

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***Please Educate Everyone Who Uses Your Sewage System!***

For more information contact the Sunshine Coast Regional District

604-885-6800 ext. 6489