

Village of Boaz Sewer Utility

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GRINDER PUMP INFORMATION SHEET FOR CUSTOMERS OF BOAZ SEWER UTILITY

(Revised January 2024)

How a Grinder Pump Sewer System Works

The Boaz Sewer Utility uses a grinder pump sewer system. Grinder pump sewer systems are used in areas where gravity service is not available. When a residence is at a lower elevation than the sewer main, it requires the use of a grinder pump to force the wastewater out of the residential area toward the retention ponds. There are currently forty (40) grinder pumps located in the Village of Boaz. There may be one, two, or three residences connected to each grinder pump.

A grinder pump is placed in a tank that is buried in the ground, and the tank provides wastewater holding storage capacity. When water is used in a residence, wastewater flows into the tank. When the wastewater in the tank reaches a preset level, the grinder pump automatically turns on, grinds the waste, and pumps it out of the tank into the sewer main. A grinder pump will normally run for one or two minutes and automatically turn off when the wastewater in the tank reaches the preset off level. The pump is powered by electricity.

Care and Use of the Grinder Pump

Basement sump pumps, foundation drains, roof drains/downspouts, and other storm water connections to the sanitary sewer system are prohibited. This water should be rerouted to outdoor lawn areas.

Eliminating the following items from entering the sewer system will reduce emergency calls for malfunctioning pumps and enhance the life of the pumps. (A detailed description of these items is on the back of this sheet.)

Disposable wipes of any kind (even if marked "flushable")

Cotton balls, cotton swabs

Condoms

Prescription medications

Paper towels, facial tissues

Cigarette butts

Band-Aids, plastic objects of any kind

Dental floss

Fats, oils, grease, combustible liquids or items of any kind

Diapers of any kind

Disinfectant towelettes

Feminine hygiene products of any kind

Sand, kitty litter, rocks, glass, metal

Paint or strong chemicals



Clockwise from upper left:
alarm system,
meter with
alarm system,
grinder pump
top



During Loss of Electrical Power

The grinder pumps cannot dispose of wastewater without electrical power. During an electrical outage, keep water usage to a minimum until power is restored.

Grinder Pump Alarm

In the event of a high-water level in the tank, an alarm will sound and a red light will come on. **If the alarm activates and there has not been a power outage that would cause the tank to fill, call Mark Anderson at 608-475-8155; second contact is Jean Nicks at 608-479-0616.** Continuing to add wastewater to the tank during an alarm event may cause wastewater to back up into the residence.

When You Are Away

If your residence is to be left unoccupied for longer than two weeks, use the following procedure prior to leaving:

Run clean water into the unit until the pump activates (approximately 15 minutes). Turn off the water and allow the grinder pump to run until it shuts off automatically.

DON'T FLUSH THAT into the Boaz Sewer System!

We all take our Wastewater Treatment and Collection System for granted. You do not have to spend much time in other countries to realize just how well our system works. Our wastewater system tends to be an “out of sight, out of mind” system to the average citizen, but it is not as robust as you might want to assume. There are many items that our collection system and wastewater treatment facility cannot handle well, and these items often lead to clogging and plugging of pipes, pumps, and other equipment. The only paper product meant to be flushed is old fashioned toilet paper, no matter what the manufacturer puts on the label.

Flushable does not mean that it is biodegradable or can break down into tiny particles. Wipes choke the sanitary sewer system, the pumps, screens, manholes, low points or any other area where the wastewater flow is restricted.

The following is a list of many items that you should not flush down your toilet to dispose of in the Boaz sewer system.

1. **Disposable Wipes, Baby Wipes, Kitchen and Bathroom Cleaning Wipes** – Although they may be marketed as being flushable; they do not break down in the collection system or treatment facility and will clog pipes, pumps, and screens.
2. **Cotton Balls** – Even though it would seem that these are made of cotton and should break down easily, they do not and can plug pipes and drains.
3. **Cotton Swabs** – Even though it would seem that these are made of cotton and should break down easily, they do not and can plug pipes and drains.
4. **Condoms** – They may seem too small to cause problems, but the elasticity can cause massive clogs when added to other debris in this listing.
5. **Prescription Medications** – Wastewater treatment facilities are not designed to deal with the compounds contained in prescription medications. Antibiotics are showing up in fish populations. Prescription medications should be taken to a drug disposal location.
6. **Paper Towels** – Single use paper products are made to be strong and last a long time and do not break down like toilet paper.
7. **Cigarette Butts** – They have some toxic chemicals as well as non-biodegradable fibers within the filters.
8. **Band-Aids** – These are made of non-biodegradable plastics and fibers that can cause large clogs in pipes.
9. **Dental Floss** – This is also non-biodegradable and wraps itself around other debris in pipes to cause large clogs, as well as wrapping around impellers of pumps causing large plugs.
10. **Fats, Oils, and Grease**
11. **Diapers (cloth, cotton, disposable, or plastic)** – These will immediately swell and clog pipes and plug pumps. Discard in the trash can.
12. **Disinfectant Towelettes** – Very similar to bathroom wipes; they do not break down in the collection system or treatment plant and will clog pipes, pumps, and screens.
13. **Facial Tissues** – These products are made to be strong and last a long time and do not break down like toilet paper.
14. **Feminine Hygiene Products** – Many include non-biodegradable plastics and fibrous materials that cause clogs in pipes and plugging within pumps.
15. **Floor Cleaning/Sweeping Wipes** - They do not break down in the collection system or treatment facility and will clog pipes, pumps, and screens.
16. **Sand, Kitty Litter** – These items can act as abrasives and wear out pumps.
17. **Paint or Strong Chemicals**