



"The Grinch Stole Christmas" ... and Delivered a Hefty Plumbing Bill

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Tis the Season

The holidays are a special time of year to celebrate with delicious food and much needed time with friends and family! It also happens to be the time of year when the San Jacinto River Authority's (SJRA) Woodlands Division, and most wastewater treatment facilities, report a severe increase in sewer blocks due to Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) and a buildup of other non-flushable products (RAGS). These obstructions almost always result in inconvenient, messy, and costly sewer overflows.

No one wants to deal with this situation at any point in time, but especially during the holidays. To ensure that a sewer backup does not spoil your day, make sure that you:

- (1) always scrape food and FOG into the trashcan and not in your sink; and
- (2) make sure that you listen to Patty Potty and only flush the 3 P's (Pee, Poo, and Paper...toilet paper that is) down the toilet.

What is FOG?

FOG includes animal fats, vegetable fats, and oils used to cook and prepare food. FOG can be a solid, liquid, or gelatinous type substance and can create a blockage in the sewer line if not disposed of properly. FOG comes from meat fats in food scraps, cooking oil, shortening, lard, butter and margarine, gravy, and food products such as mayonnaise, salad dressings, and sour cream.

FOG poured down kitchen drains accumulates inside sewer pipes. As the FOG builds up, it restricts the flow in the pipe and can cause untreated wastewater to back up into homes and businesses, resulting in high costs for cleanup and restoration.

Restaurants, cafeterias, and fast-food establishments spend tens of thousands of dollars on plumbing emergencies each year to deal with grease blockages.

Communities spend billions of dollars every year unplugging or replacing grease-blocked pipes, repairing pump stations, and cleaning up costly and illegal wastewater spills. Excessive FOG in the sewer system can affect local wastewater rates.

What are RAGS?

We now live in a society that convenience is the name of the game. So many consumer prod-

ucts are designed to be discarded after a single use to make things more convenient for us all. While it might help the consumer, wastewater treatment operators cringe at the thought.

There are wipes for virtually every household and personal hygiene purpose; in fact, other kinds

of products have joined the convenient "flushable" bandwagon like kitty litter and diapers. Convenience and clean are now the primary motivations. Unfortunately, many of these man-made fiber products turn out to be non-biodegradable, so they 'flush down, but they don't flush out!'

TRASH 'EM DON'T FLUSH 'EM!

NO WIPES IN THE PIPES!

PattyPotty.com

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Sewer systems around the world, including SJRA, are now packed with millions of flushed wipes that form monstrous "RAGS" when they encounter another sewer enemy that gets carelessly dumped down kitchen sinks - FOG. The end result is not only a costly, disgusting mess for wastewater treatment plants like SJRA's Woodlands Division, but could potentially increase in your utility bill.

SJRA is proud to mention that we have joined Patty Potty's No Wipes in the Pipes Campaign in an attempt to re-educate consumers on the proper disposal of these convenience products.

What Can You Do To Help?

Reducing FOG going down your sink and only flushing the 3P's prevent sewer problems; it is that simple.

Following these do's and don'ts will help you and your neighbors avoid expensive sewer backups, plumbing emergencies, and rate increases to cover sewer maintenance and repairs, while helping protect water quality in your community.

DO'S:

- Recycle used cooking oil or properly dispose of it by pouring it into a sealable container and placing the sealed container in the trash. To recycle large amounts, such as what's left over from a catfish fry or frying a turkey, contact a local recycler by looking in the yellow pages under "Greases" or "Rendering." If you have a lot of oil to dispose of, use clay cat litter. Just mix the litter, a little at a time, into the oil. When all the oil has been absorbed, pour the cat litter into a trash bag, seal the bag, and then dispose of it in your regular trash.
- Scrape food scraps into the trash, not the sink.
- Flush the 3 P's:
 - o Pee,
 - o Poo, and
 - o Paper...toilet paper that is!

DON'TS:

- Don't use a garbage disposal or food grinder. Grinding food up before rinsing it down the drain does not remove FOG; it just makes the pieces smaller. Even non-greasy food scraps can plug your home's sewer lines. So don't put food of any kind down the drain.
- Don't pour cooking oil, pan drippings, bacon grease, salad dressings, or sauces down the sink or toilet, or into street gutters or storm drains.
- Don't run water over dishes, pans, fryers, and griddles to wash oil and grease down the drain.
- Don't flush:
 - o wipes,
 - o feminine hygiene products,
 - o dental floss,
 - o diapers,
 - o kitty litter,
 - o the list goes on and on and on!

For more information on SJRA, the Cease the Grease Program, or the No Wipes in the Pipes Campaign, please visit: www.sjra.net/woodlands or www.pattypotty.com. ♦

DON'T FEED THE Grease Monster



Keep FATS, OILS, and GREASE out of your pipes



SJRA is a proud sponsor of the Cease the Grease program.