



Roanoke Rapids Sanitary District

P.O. Box 308
1000 Jackson Street
Roanoke Rapids, NC 27870
(252) 537-9137
Fax: (252) 537-3064
www.rrsd.org

The Public Advised to *NOT* Flush Disinfecting Wipes, Paper Towels down Toilet – Throw Them Away instead

***Sanitary District's Wastewater Treatment Plant May get
Overwhelmed, Customers may face expensive In-home
Plumbing backups and Blockages***

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Contact: Dan Brown
dbrown@rrsd.org

Roanoke Rapids Sanitary District – While the Roanoke Rapids Sanitary District encourages customers to follow the [Centers for Disease Control recommendations](#) to clean surfaces with disinfecting wipes to reduce the spread of COVID-19, **it is important to discard those items in the trash, not the toilet.**

Flushing wipes, paper towels and similar products down toilets will clog sewers and cause backups and overflows at wastewater treatment facilities, creating an additional public health risk during the coronavirus pandemic. Even wipes labeled “flushable” will clog pipes and interfere with sewage collection and treatment throughout the community.

Wastewater treatment facilities already are reporting issues with our sewer management collection systems. We are asking residents to not discard wipes in the toilet, but instead to throw them in the trash to avoid backups and overflow. Our centralized sewage collection system depends on gravity and enough water flow to move along human waste and biodegradable toilet paper. The system was not designed for individual nylon wipes and paper towels. [The wipes and paper towels do not break down like toilet paper, and therefore clog systems very quickly.](#)

Wipes are among the leading causes of sewer system backups, impacting sewer system and treatment plant pumps and treatment systems. Many spills go to the river where they have broad ranging impacts on public-health and the environment. Preventing sewer spills is important, especially during this COVID-19 emergency, for the protection of public health and the environment.

For those who are concerned about safely disposing of these items, there are steps you can take to cut down on risk of contamination that do not involve flushing the products in the toilet. Placing items in a tightly sealed bag, and then placing it within another bag is a safe way to dispose of it.

Please do not flush disinfecting wipes or paper towels down the toilet.

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