

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN

INFORMATION RELEASE

March 17, 2020

Flushable Wipes Create 'Fatburgs' and Headaches for Utility Workers

Recently, the public's rapid response to extenuating circumstances has affected available stocks of cleaning supplies and many paper products throughout the region. Stocks of hand sanitizing liquids or sprays have been depleted in many retail outlets and consumers have opted to purchase 'flushable' antiseptic wipes or similar products. Do not flush these items down the toilet. Toilet paper is designed to disintegrate into pulp and move easily through the process of sewage or septic treatment. Flushable wipes and other products are not. These products should be disposed of in your regular curbside garbage.

Residents should always avoid disposing of flushable wipes, paper towels, reinforced paper towels or hygiene related products down the toilet. These products can seriously affect the operations of sewer infrastructure by building up, attracting other solid materials, clogging pipes and treatment plant equipment. Wastewater operators have to engage in the very unpleasant task of finding and extracting these blockages, given the nickname of 'fatburgs.'

Rina Seppen, RDOS Wastewater Utilities Foreman asks residents to be mindful, "In this challenging time when we are spending more time at home as we do our part, we must be conscious that our homes have to function. The last thing we need is to have the sewer lines clog and essential services stretched as we work to serve the public needs. We thank you for your assistance."

The intent of this reminder is to avoid any disruption to sewer system operations, damage to infrastructure, downtime for removal of impactions, safety of wastewater workers and inconvenience to the public.

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For further information, please contact, Zoe Kirk, Public Works Projects Coordinator at (250) 490 – 4110 or Cameron Baughen, Solid Waste Coordinator at (250) 490-4203 or info@rdos.bc.ca.

Karla Kozakevich, Chair
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen



A flushable wipe 'fatburg'

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