



Paper & Plastic Products and Your Sewer System

To flush or not to flush, that is the question!

Your Hillsborough County wastewater system safely and effectively preserves the quality of life and health that we enjoy in this county. The County's wastewater system protects public health and the environment, including wetlands, rivers, and streams from dangerous and harmful viruses and bacteria.

When you flush paper or plastic wastes that are not easily shredded or dissolvable, the wastewater system can experience problems moving the wastewater to the wastewater treatment plant for processing.

“Where does the sewage/wastewater go?” The wastewater travels by gravity through eight inch pipes until it reaches a wastewater pumping station. Most pumping stations cannot handle a lot of foreign plastics or heavy paper products. The result is that the pumps get clogged and are unable to move the wastewater to its proper destination, the wastewater treatment plant, where it's cleaned and disinfected to protect public health.

If the wastewater doesn't get to the treatment plant for processing, it may overflow from the wastewater collection system via manholes into homes, businesses, lakes, rivers, and ponds, creating puddles of raw wastewater.

“How can I prevent wastewater overflows?” Easy! Don't flush kitchen paper towels, feminine products, hygiene towels (like those used in hospice care), baby wipes, moist towelettes, small toys, plastic bags, or clothing.

**For more information on preventing wastewater overflows,
contact your Hillsborough County Water Department
Pretreatment Staff Member at 813-274-6800**