
Township of Livingston

Sewer Dos & Don'ts

Do you want to save money, avoid inconvenience, and prevent the downright awfulness of having a sewer backup?

Follow these Dos & Don'ts:

DOs:

DO: Put liquid fats, oils and grease (FOG) into a jar or container with a lid and then dispose of that container in the trash on trash collection day. Wipe down greasy pots and pans with a paper towel prior to washing in the sink or dishwasher.

DO: Keep a wastebasket in the bathroom to dispose of solid wastes. Disposable diapers, personal wipes and other personal hygiene products **do not** belong in the sewer system.

DO: Use a strainer over the drain in your sink, tub, and shower. Then, empty the collected material into the garbage.

DO: Use a composter if you can. If you haven't begun a compost heap, you can start one with lawn clippings, garden rubbish, and food scraps; then, use the compost to fertilize your garden. The Township has educational materials on the website at www.livingstonnj.org.

DO: Use the manufacturer's recommended amount of detergent for washing in the kitchen or laundry. The large amounts of fat, oil and grease suspended in the detergent makes cleaning and treating wastewater difficult and more costly.

DON'TS:

DON'T: Pour fats, oils or grease from cooking down the sink drain. If your pots and pans are just oily or greasy, don't rinse them; wipe them out with a paper towel.

DON'T: Pour sour milk down the sink. One liter of full cream milk has enough fat in it to cover the surface of an Olympic-sized swimming pool.

DON'T: Flush either baby or personal so-called "flushable" wipes. Both will lead to a sewer system clog long before they ever disintegrate.

DON'T: Use the toilet as a wastebasket/garbage can.

DON'T: Discard food scraps, tea leaves, coffee grounds or eggshells down the sink. Using the drain and sewer system is not an appropriate way to dispose of food scraps.

DON'T: Flush razor blades, pharmaceutical products, cigarette butts, nail polish remover, toilet deodorant dispensers, or other non-biodegradable products down the toilet. Also, toys that find their way into the system cause problems; if you have small children, consider toilet seat safety clips.

DON'T: Place jewelry or valuables on the edge of the basin or the sink. Once flushed down the toilet or dropped down the drain, these items are very difficult (maybe impossible) to recover.

DON'T: Flush diapers, sanitary napkins, tampons, convenience pads, surgical bandages, syringes, and cotton tipped stems, or pantyhose down the toilet. Don't flush plastics or plastic film from personal hygiene items, including disposable diapers, either.

DON'T: Pour paint, engine oil, pesticides or chemicals down the sink, and don't try to burn them. Some hazardous materials can corrode the sewer, while others complicate the treatment process. In fact, dumping them in the sewer is illegal and could subject you to a fine. This isn't only because of the threat of these hazards getting into the environment; but also because these chemicals pose a health threat to maintenance crews working in the sewers. Similarly, by throwing hazardous materials in the garbage, you're creating a risk for garbage collectors.

DON'T: Use more laundry or dish detergent than recommended. The average household uses **3X more** detergent than manufacturers recommended for washing dishes and clothes. When these detergents enter the sewer system, they hold large amounts of fats, oils, and grease in suspension. This makes cleaning and treating the wastewater difficult and more costly. In addition to saving money on buying detergents by cutting down on the amount of detergent used, you'll be putting less phosphate into the environment to cause the growth of algae in water.

DON'T: Plant trees or bushes on or next to the sewer line on your property. Once roots become established, they can enter the sewer line, causing costly damage.

DON'T: Flush a commercial grease interceptor with hot water to clear or clean the interceptor in lieu of cleaning and pumping out the interceptor.

**Township of Livingston
Sewer Utility**

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