

March 1, 2018 (with international input)

International Wastewater Industry Statement on Flushable/Non-flushable Products

Executive Summary

All around the world, water/wastewater utilities (municipal and/or regional governments) have the task to treat and deliver drinking water to homes and businesses and then collect and treat the associated wastewater. In areas where municipal services are not available, privately owned decentralized or onsite sewage systems perform this essential service. We must do so in a way that ensures safe drinking water, protects the local environment and does so in the most economically-efficient manner to ensure systems are sustainable, viable and affordable.

Our wastewater collection systems were designed to convey what we refer to as the "3Ps" - Pee, Poop and Paper (toilet paper). Other items entering our collection systems or privately owned onsite sewage systems cause tremendous problems with sewer and equipment clogs or damage, and effect our ability to deal with the final sludge from our treatment. These products cost local utilities 250 million dollars every year in additional maintenance, repairs, replacements and transportation. Clogs can cause overflows that threaten the local environment and wildlife.

As the water/wastewater utilities (municipal and/or regional governments), we continue to educate our citizens on the 3Ps and discourage the use of toilets as garbage cans for paper towels, fats/oils/grease, medications, hygiene products etc. Meanwhile, some manufacturers are marketing wipes and other products labeled 'flushable' and are encouraging users to flush their products into toilets. At the same time, other products commonly used in a bathroom are being labeled bio-degradable or disposable, leading to their disposal into a toilet.

Water and wastewater organizations that represent the water/wastewater utilities, municipal and/or regional government or privately owned decentralized or onsite sewage systems agree:

- Until a wastewater industry approved standard for flushability is established, only the 3Ps – should be flushed.
- All products designed to come in contact with human waste and/or related germs while in the bathroom that have a high likelihood of being flushed into a toilet (including wipes and personal hygiene products) should be clearly marked as 'non-flushable'. Such labelling should:
 - Use the words "**Do Not Flush**" and a clearly understood symbol
 - Be clearly visible to the consumer at point of purchase
 - Be clearly visible for user at point of dispensing
 - Include instructions for the product to be disposed of in the bin or garbage/trash
- We do not accept INDA/EDANA's (manufacturer trade groups) Guidance Document 3 (GD3) or any other manufacturing industry's determination of 'flushability' at this time. Until there is a standard agreed upon by the wastewater utility industry, all such products should be labeled as "**Do Not Flush**" as laid out above.
- Key requirements for a Wastewater Utility Industry standard include that the product:
 - a) breaks into pieces quickly;
 - b) must not be buoyant;
 - c) does not contain plastic or regenerated cellulose and only contains materials which will readily degrade in a range of natural environments.

ORGANIZATION NAMES:





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Ontario Onsite
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Alberta Onsite Wastewater
MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION



**Manitoba Onsite Wastewater
Management Association**



**Saskatchewan Onsite Wastewater
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**Western Canada Onsite Wastewater
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**WCOWMA Onsite Wastewater
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