Wastewater & Wipes: Adversaries or Allies?

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Director, Regulatory Affairs
National Association of Clean Water Agencies
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“Wipes in the Pipes”
“Flushable Wipes Clogging Pipes”?

Maine Collection System Study

- Paper: 40%
- Baby Wipes: 18%
- Flushable Wipes: 12%
- Household Wipes: 5%
- Feminine Hygiene: 18%
- Other: 7%
- "Flushable Wipes Clogging Pipes?"
Costs to Clean Water Agencies for Non-Dispersible Materials

Vancouver, WA

• $1.86 million in 2008-2013
  – Capital investments on pump retrofits - $1.16 million
  – Deragging costs - $128,000/yr
  – Additional electrical costs - $30,000/yr
  – Disposal costs for 429 tons of material - $25,600
Costs to Clean Water Agencies for Non-Dispersible Materials

• Clean Water Services in Oregon spends approximately $120,000 dealing with problems from these products.

• The Orange County Sanitation District in California has spent $2.4 million in the past five years on new equipment, and over $300,000 in one year to unclog pumps.

• Columbus Water Works in Georgia spent $550,000 in the last two years on new in-line grinding equipment and spends $250,000 each year on additional operations and maintenance costs.

• Portland Water District in Maine spent $4.3 million to install screens at two pump stations.
NACWA’s Involvement with Wipes

• 2008 – First email from a utility about problem
• 2009 – Issue raised in several sources:
  – Emails from two NACWA members
  – Pretreatment Coordinators Yahoo Group
• 2009 – NACWA surveys members to determine extent of problem
• 2010 – NACWA and WEF set up joint workgroup
NACWA’s Involvement with Wipes

• 2012 – APWA organizes meeting with Costco
• 2013 – NACWA/WEF members review INDA draft 3rd Edition Flushability Guidelines; NACWA comments on draft
• 2013 – WEF webinar with 600 registrants
• July 25, 2013 – NACWA, WEF, APWA, and INDA have face-to-face meeting
Wipes in the pipes snarling sewers

Kirsti Marohn, USA TODAY  7:57 a.m. EDT July 17, 2013

ST. CLOUD, Minn. -- They are touted as disposable and even flushable, but disinfecting wipes are causing headaches for operators of city sewer systems.

The products appeal to consumers in part because of manufacturers' claims that they can be conveniently flushed down the toilet. But their cloth-like material doesn't break down in the sanitary sewer system like toilet paper and can block sewer lines, clog equipment and increase cities' maintenance and repair costs.

(Photo: Kimm Anderson, St. Cloud Times)

STORY HIGHLIGHTS
'Fatberg' dead ahead! 15 tons of slime and wet-naps clog London sewer

BY NIDHI SUBBARAMAN
MT @MikeTaylorShow: Thanks @MYsaws for this pic. A giant, concrete strong mass of butt wipes. Stop flushing them! pic.twitter.com/DjDKVZxPxR
Toilets Are Not Trash Cans!
NACWA Campaign to Protect Our Pipes, Pumps, Plants, & Personnel
Protecting Our Pipes, Pumps, Plants, & Personnel
Wastewater/INDA Technical Workgroup

• Focusing on flushability issue
• INDA, NACWA, WEF (Water Environment Federations), and APWA (American Public Works Association)
• 6 representatives from wastewater, 6 from INDA
• Three in-person meetings, concluding in August
Definition of “Flushable”?
Public Education on What Should Get Flushed?

The 3 Ps:

Pee, Poop, and Toilet Paper
Maine Consumer Education Pilot

“Save Your Pipes: Don’t Flush Baby Wipes”

www.SaveYourPipes.org
Consumer Education in Oslo

Manhole Covers:
“Bæsj, Tiss, Dopapir”
(“Poop, Pee, TP”)
Improved Labeling

INGREDIENTS: WATER, PROPYLENE GLYCOL, ALOE BARBADENSIS (ALOE VERA) LEAF JUICE, TOCOPHERYL (VITAMIN E) ACETATE, PEG-75 LANOLIN, DISODIUM COCOAMPHODIACETATE, POLYSORBATE 20, CITRIC ACID, DISODIUM PHOSPHATE, DISODIUM EDTA, 2-BROMO-2-NITROPROPANE-1, 3-DIOL, IODOPROPYNYL BUTYLCARBAmate.

To avoid danger of suffocation, keep bag away from babies and children.

Questions? Call 1-800-910-6574
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NOT FOR INDIVIDUAL RESALE

Up & Up® baby wipes are unique, cloth-like wipes that are strong, yet very soft. Each wipe is moistened with a mild cleansing solution that is even gentle enough for use on a baby's face and hands. This container design ensures that each wipe comes out open and ready to use on any part of a baby's delicate skin.

TM COTTON ENHANCED is a trademark of Cotton Incorporated. This product contains a minimum of 15% cotton.

Store at room temperature.
Keep lid closed when not in use.
Dispose of used wipes in trash receptacle. Do not flush.
Improved Labeling
**Improved Labeling**

*Are Shittens flushable?*
This is what we like to call a "grey area" (brown area?). Can you flush them? ... While many wipes advertise "flushable," all we hear about are the stories of destroyed septic systems across the country. You know your plumbing best and we'll trust you to make the best decisions for your household. At your own risk, septic-ly speaking. We're going to "Shitten our ass" and not recommend it.
Improved Labeling

VerdantWater: @GetShittens: Would you pls tweet photo of Shittens package w DNF instructions? Ones I've seen were vague, snarky. MT @NoDigMaine 9:23pm, Feb 02 from Twitter for iPad

GetShittens: @VerdantWater @NoDigMaine thanks so much for that info! We are kinda new to the wipes biz. On our next run we will have it. Appreciate it 1:09pm, Feb 03 from Twitter for iPhone

VerdantWater 1:22pm via Twitter for Android

@GetShittens: We look forward to it- would make us damn happy. Right @NACWA, @WEForz, @NEWaterEnv?!? @ScottFirmin @neorsd @NoDigMaine
Work with Manufacturers/Retailers on Other Products

Maine Collection System Study

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- Flushable Wipes 12%
- Feminine Hygiene 18%
- Household Wipes 5%
- Other 7%
- Paper 40%
- Other 7%
www.nacwa.org/flushables