

# Maintaining the toilet

Stopped up toilets are the number one maintenance issue by far. If you can prevent the toilet from becoming stopped up and clear it if it does, you will be helping the maintenance staff in your community. The information below will be helpful in keeping your toilets working.

## **What NOT to flush:**

### 12 Everyday Items You Should Never Flush Down Your Toilet

### 16 Things You Should Never Flush Down The Toilet – Wastewater Transport Services

1. "Flushable" wipes
2. Paper Towels and Tissues
3. Too much toilet paper
4. Cotton balls, rounds or swabs
5. Feminine products
6. Dental floss
7. Hair
8. Bandages
9. Vitamins and medications
10. Paint
11. Cigarette butts
12. Fats, oils or grease
13. Kitty Litter
14. Gum
15. Pet fish
16. Any food
17. Bleach
18. Diapers
19. Plastic
20. Toilet bowl scrub pads

## **When the toilet stops up**

### How to Unclog a Toilet

For about 90 percent of clogged toilets, you only need one special tool — a toilet plunger. Buy a toilet plunger with an extension flange on the rubber bell-shaped end. A toilet plunger with an extension flange is designed to fit toilets better, so you can deliver more “oomph” to the plunge. The toilet plunger will unplug sink and tub drains, too, if you simply fold the flange back into the bell

### **How To Use a Plunger**

First, plunge the toilet with the rubber flange pulled out to get a better seal. Push in and out vigorously, keeping enough water in the bowl to cover the plunger. As always, towels handy to wipe up any water that splashes out.

**Plunging Tips** – A toilet plunger fits over and seals the toilet drain. Wear rubber gloves – things can get messy— and follow these plunging tips:

1. Make your first plunge a gentle one. Initially, the bell will be full of air. A hard thrust will force the air back around the seal and blow water all over the bathroom and you!
2. Once you force out the air, plunge vigorously in and out, maintaining the seal. You'll be forcing water in both directions in the drain, which will effectively loosen most clogs. Stick with it, plunging 15 to 20 times if necessary.
3. Be patient. Try alternating between steady strokes and occasional monster heaves.
4. Keep enough water in the bowl so the toilet plunger stays covered. Trying to force air through the toilet trap won't generate much pressure.
5. Most of the time, plunging is all it takes to clear the clog. But for tougher clogs, try using a toilet snake.
6. Energy efficient toilets – Energy efficient toilets use less water to flush and, consequently, are more prone to becoming stopped up. The tips below will help you keep an energy efficient toilet working. How to prevent stoppages:

#### [7 Tips to Reduce Clogs in Your Low Flush Toilet](#)

1. **Say no to ultra-style toilet paper** – While you may really enjoy the extra fluffy ultra-style toilet papers, they absorb more water than regular ones. This, combined with the limited water the low flush toilet is producing, means more likely clogs. Super absorbent tissue plus limited water means it is absorbing and sitting, rather than moving through as it should. Change your toilet paper, reduce clogs.

2. **Run more water** – If your entire home is full of water saving devices, and your sewer line hasn't been adjusted to deal with the appropriate float level, you will actually have to waste water sometimes in order to keep the system moving. I know, ironic. Run an empty load of laundry, or run the hose into a floor drain to allow more water into the system to get the "float level" back up to push debris through the drain lines.
3. **Force a flush** – Another way to get more water into your drain system is to force a large flush. To do this, you can fill a large bucket with water and pour it into the toilet. This will cause the toilet to manually flush and push the water through the stub and trap under it to clear it of any resting debris. NOTE: DON'T do this if you suspect a clog, as it could cause the toilet to overflow. Use a plunger instead.
4. **Flush more** – Again, flushing more often seems like it defeats the point of a low flush toilet, but remember, it is a design flaw only in homes where the sewer line wasn't set up to manage lower water levels. Because most homes were built to last a very long time, retrofitting new water saving devices onto older drain systems is a norm. New homes built with sustainability and water conservation in mind will likely have less issues. So, flush more frequently to reduce clogs.
5. **Don't allow extras** – Anything extra absorbent, heavy, or that doesn't break down easily, will become a culprit for causing clogs. Either they themselves will create a blockage, or they will collect debris and build into a clog. The most common problem items are: wipes, tampons, and paper towels. Don't let your guests or your family flush these items if you have a low flush toilet. Use the trash can with a lid instead.
6. **Conduct preventative cleanings** – Scheduling a regular preventative maintenance sewer or drain cleaning can help reduce clogs by pushing additional debris through the line. Consider a cleaning every 6 months. Ask for discounts for regular service to keep your system from backing up due to clogs that keep building.
7. **Keep a plunger handy** – Whether you have a low flush toilet or not, we always recommend having a plunger in every bathroom. This will help prevent embarrassing guest issues, especially when they haven't followed the above rules. A plunger should be designed to fit your toilet and create enough pressure to push through any clog.