



Can the Grease!

Keep sewage from backing up into *YOUR* basement

Another **GREEN** Initiative From WSSC

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 27, 2006

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There are a lot of things that can go wrong in a house, but few troubles are more disgusting than sewage backing up into your basement. Fortunately, most sewer clogs are preventable, if homeowners only knew more about the care and feeding of their sewer system.

The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) aims to provide homeowners -- and businesses and restaurants -- with the information they need to protect their pipes, their homes and their wallets...as well as the environment. In a major effort beginning with the New Year, WSSC employees will hit the speaking circuit, presenting tips to homeowner associations, civic groups, business associations and schools.

“The easiest action that a person can take is to simply ‘Can the Grease’ instead of pouring it down kitchen drains,” says Andrew Brunhart, WSSC general manager. “People don’t realize that one easy action can potentially save them from messy and unhealthy sewer backups, so we are undertaking a major outreach program to spread the word.”

Expensive sewer backups are a hassle for homeowners and businesses, but grease can clog anywhere in the 5,200 miles of WSSC sewer pipe that run through Prince George's and Montgomery counties. When the grease builds up in primary sewer mains, environmental harm can result as untreated sewer water overflows manholes and ends up in the many creeks and streams that eventually lead to the Chesapeake Bay.

Brunhart is especially concerned about stopping the environmentally harmful overflows.

Sewer system overflows are a national problem, with up to 75,000 major events reported annually to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. In the WSSC service area, the percentage of overflows due to grease can reach as high as 60 percent.

“We can prevent thousands of gallons of wastewater from reaching the Bay, if we can convince people to save their grease in a soup cans and toss it in the trash, and if restaurants make the extra effort to keep fats, oils and grease out of their drains,” Brunhart emphasized.

People can contact WSSC for more information or to invite a speaker to their school or association meeting. Just go to the WSSC website at www.wsscwater.com, and click on “Can the Grease” or email communications@wsscwater.com, or call 301-206-8100. Groups that schedule a WSSC “Can the Grease” presentation will receive special lid tops with directions on how they can help prevent sewage backups and overflows.

“CAN THE GREASE!” TIPS FROM WSSC:

Fats, oils and grease can clog sewer pipes and damage your home and the environment. Follow these easy steps to prevent sewage back-ups and overflows :

- Ü Never pour kitchen greases or oils down the drain, even if you think you are “washing it down” with hot water.
- Ü Pour cooled grease into a can (a soup can works great) and throw in the trash.
- Ü Scrape grease and food scraps into the trash.
- Ü Put baskets/strainers in sinks to catch food scraps. Toss scraps on a compost heap, or into the trash.

With more than 5,300 of fresh water pipeline and over 5,200 miles of sewer pipeline throughout its service area, WSSC appreciates notification from members of the public if they suspect a sanitary sewer overflow or a sewer back-up. Call 301-206-4002 or toll free 1-800-828-6439 at any time to report water or sewer emergencies in Prince George’s or Montgomery counties.

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WSSC is among the 10 largest water and wastewater utilities in the nation, serving more than 1.7 million customers in Prince George’s and Montgomery counties. We operate and maintain seven water and wastewater plants, over 5,300 miles of fresh water pipeline and over 5,200 miles of sewer pipeline. In our 88-year history we have never had a drinking water quality violation.