

Flushed baby wipes the culprit in many clogged sewer problems

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Tuesday, 18 June 2013 00:00 - Last Updated Tuesday, 18 June 2013 12:10

When the Scottsburg City Council first began the task of learning how best to help the city's aging sewage treatment plant and its collection system, who knew it would lead to a discussion about baby wipes.

Baby wipes?

Oh, yes, advised Scottsburg Mayor Bill Graham and city engineer Bill Saegesser. "Baby wipes have caused problems for cities all over the state," Saegesser added.

Apparently, the innocuous product is used in great quantities by parents with babies and young children.

What is unfortunate is that these adults think that a dirty baby wipe is best flushed down the toilet, that it's biodegradable.

"Not true," said Saegesser. "Unless it's clearly marked on the package that it is 'flushable,' people should discard them in trash, not down the toilet."

Baby wipes have been found to cause horrendous obstructions in city lines.

They really cause havoc when they reach lift stations, where sewage is given a mechanical "push" to continue its journey to the treatment plant on the city's north side.

They even cause problems at the treatment plant, it was learned.

"Of all the things people think is okay to flush down a toilet, it's probably one of the major items that causes the city fits, as far as sewage treatment and maintenance is concerned," Saegesser advised.

And, of course, the more work that has to be done to keep lines and lift stations operating, the more money and manpower the city pours into these efforts and the less time staff has to address other issues.

Mayor Graham recommended that people simply read the package before purchasing these cleaning aids.

"Most of these products are marked if they are biodegradable. Some even say they are non-flushable.

Confirming what you are buying will take a few minutes, but it sure helps us to ensure we have a system that is operating as it should," he said. So everyone using them should take notice of this.