

Bag it and bin it
– please don't flush it



Help us to keep our
beaches and rivers clean

Introduction

Every day our beaches and rivers come under threat from our own bad habits. This is because each year we flush two billion items down the toilet which could pollute our waterways.

Southern Water's sewers and treatment works are built to deal with human waste and water. However, if non-biodegradable items such as nappies are flushed down the toilet they can cause blockages. This can lead to flooding in homes and gardens and pollution in rivers and the sea.



Pollution presents a possible health risk to humans and animals. Southern Water wants to help keep our environment as clean and healthy as possible. So, we are urging everyone to join the Bag It and Bin It campaign. Just wrap up personal items and throw them in the bin for a cleaner, free flowing system.

Enjoying our environment

We all want to be able to walk along our rivers and beaches and take part in water sports without encountering a tide of debris.

Waste products such as cotton buds, condoms, nappies and needles can pose a health risk as well as being an eyesore.

The dangers of condoms, syringes and used sanitary towels are not obvious to children playing by polluted water.

Animals and birds may also eat the rubbish or become entangled in debris. This can stop them being able to eat, breathe and reproduce healthily.

Birds have even been found to have eaten condoms or picked up sanitary towels to build nests with.

Keeping the system flowing

Southern Water is responsible for cleaning wastewater in Sussex, Kent, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight at its 400 wastewater treatment works.

Each day the company treats and recycles 1,400 million litres of wastewater from 1.7 million properties.

However, these works are not designed to deal with non-biodegradable waste which can block the system and pollute rivers or the sea.

Fine screening removes large items but small items such as condoms



or cotton buds can squeeze through any mesh.

Bulky items like nappies and sanitary towels can cause blockages in the 21,000 kilometres of sewage pipes running underground and cause flooding in gardens and even our homes.

Nearly two-thirds of blockages in sewers are caused by items flushed thoughtlessly down the toilet.

Most wastewater pipes are only 100mm (4 inches) in diameter and are not designed to carry anything other than wastewater and bio-degradable products such as toilet paper.

If you think a sewer is blocked call Southern Water on **0845 278 0845**.

What we're doing

Southern Water has invested £3 billion in keeping our environment clean since 1990.

We are continuing to spend many more millions on upgrading sewers, pumping stations and treatment works.

Our four million customers can play a vital role in keeping systems in the south east flowing smoothly.



How to deal with rubbish

It's easy to start helping to clean up our environment.

Toilet Paper

Toilet paper decomposes naturally and can be flushed down the toilet.

Tampons and applicators

Wrap up and put in the bin.

Sanitary Towels

Dispose of it special bags available from pharmacies.

Nappies

Flush the baby's waste down the toilet, then wrap the nappy and put in the bin.

Supermarkets also sell nappy disposal bags.

Incontinence Pads

Use special bags available from pharmacies.

Cotton buds, bandages, plasters and dental floss

Throw these in the bin.

Razors and blades

Wrap these in something hard and protective and put them in the bin.

Condoms

These should be wrapped up and put in the bin.

Medicines

Return unused or out of date medicine to a pharmacy for safe disposal.

Syringes and needles

Contact your local hospital or health authority for details of the nearest needle bank.

These can cause injuries to refuse collectors or wastewater operatives.

Chemicals

Ask your local council what arrangements they have for disposing of these dangerous substances.

Just remember to bag it and bin it – don't flush it!

Fighting the fat

Each day householders pour thousands of litres of fat, grease and cooking oil down their sinks.

Over time the fat builds up as a solid mass and blocks sewers, preventing wastewater from flowing through.

The wastewater is then forced out of the sewers and into gardens, streets and sometimes homes – something we would all like to avoid.

The most environmentally friendly way to dispose of unwanted fat is to mix it

with seeds, nuts and raisins to make a 'cake' for birds.

This helps keep them healthy and saves our sewers.

Alternatively let the fat solidify in a disposable container and put it in the bin.

Advice for business

Businesses seeking guidance on the disposal of oil should contact their local council or the Environment Agency (see contact details overleaf).

Further information

Bag It and Bin It is a national campaign led by the water industry, including Southern Water, to promote the responsible disposal of personal products.

Environmental organisations, government agencies, sanitary protection, disposable nappy and incontinence pad manufacturers and other non-government bodies all play a key role in encouraging people to Bag It and Bin It.

It is managed by UK CEED, an independent not-for-profit foundation, and is supported by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs under the Environmental Action Fund.

For more details about the campaign visit:

www.bagandbin.org

or telephone

01733 311644

Advice for business:

Environment Agency:

www.environment-agency.gov.uk

or telephone

08708 506506

For details of how to contact your local council visit:

www.direct.gov.uk

Contacting Southern Water:

Customer Service Centre

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Southern House
Yeoman Road
Worthing
BN13 3NX

Telephone:

0845 278 0845

Email: customerservices@southernwater.co.uk

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