


# Pipes, Pump Stations & Plumbing Problem-Solving



Your Partnership  
with Hampton's  
Waste Water  
Operation Division



**P**lumbing in your house or business and the city's waste water system are closely connected; a problem in one can affect the other. That's why the City of Hampton's Waste Water Operations takes a proactive approach to maintenance, trouble-shooting and customer service. With more than 100 pump stations and 400 miles of underground pipes that's a big task. By using new technology, our highly skilled team is working to identify and fix problems—before they affect you. Our success depends on your cooperation and understanding of the program.

This publication answers frequently asked questions and outlines a wide variety of services available to customers. We hope you find it useful.

*If you have any questions,  
please contact us:*

**Public Works Wastewater Operations**  
**727-8410**

## Stoppages

Here's a tip:

If you have more than one bathroom and one toilet flushes successfully, the problem is your plumbing. If all sinks and toilets are slow to drain or backing up—the problem is probably in the city line. (Generally, the city line runs from the middle of the street to about 24-inches behind the curb or sidewalk.)

Stoppages can be caused by improper disposal in plumbing and tree roots.

City Wastewater crews are available from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. to investigate sewer stoppages and to clear it if the stoppage is on the city's side of the line. Emergency crews are on call seven days a week, 365 days a year. If an address has three or more stoppages within a year, a crew will TV the lines to identify the problem and repair it.

**These items should not  
be put in plumbing—**

**RAGS • SPONGES**

**TOYS • GREASE • PAINTS**

**AUTOMOTIVE CHEMICALS**

**FLAMMABLE LIQUIDS**

(NOTE: most household chemicals can be taken to the Household Chemical dropoff program which is operated by Virginia Peninsulas Public Service Authority. Phone: 259-9850)



## Overflows or Odors

Grease and other materials put in toilets or sinks, and excess water infiltrating the sanitary sewer system can cause overflows. These generally occur from a manhole cover in the middle of the street. Overflowing sewage in the yard is caused by a stoppage in a sewer line or clean-out. Overflows should be reported immediately. Keep people and pets away from raw sewage. A city crew will investigate the situation if you contact us. This is true even if there is only the smell but an overflow or stoppage is not observed.



## Repairs To Manhole Covers, Cleanouts, Cave-ins

Broken manholes or cleanout covers are not uncommon and can be repaired during normal operating hours.

Cave-ins are caused when a pipe or a joint between pipes fails. This needs to be repaired right away to avoid further damage. When reporting the need for any of these repairs, please let the Hampton Customer Call Center know your name, phone number, an exact address where the problem is.



## Smoke Testing

When rainwater seeps into the sanitary sewer system, Hampton Roads Sanitation District must treat clean water along with waste water, which can increase customer costs.

Hampton is reducing infiltration by smoke testing to identify problems. We then replace broken cleanout lids; disconnect roof drains; and repair cracks in pipes. Generally, a notice will let customers know what's going on. Air blowers force smoke through part of a sewer system. If yours is properly sealed, the smoke will flow through your pipes and out your roof vent pipe. Cross connections linking sanitary sewer to storm sewer or visa versa are not allowed—ever.

◀ While the smoke is not harmful, it may set off smoke alarms inside buildings. People confined to home or those suffering from heart disease or respiratory ailments, should report any concerns to the crew working or Hampton Customer Call Center (311 or 727-8311).

## FOG: Fats Oils Grease — A Costly Problem

Pouring cooking or automotive grease down sinks, garbage disposals or toilets is harmful. It costs time, inconvenience and money for repairs in your pipes and in the city's system. Grease shortens the useful life of pipes and may require sooner-than-needed enlargement of a pump station.

## Restaurants & Big Kitchens

Having the right size grease trap and a regular maintenance program prevents tons of grease from backing up plumbing and clogging city sewer pipes. When not properly filtered out, grease creates large blockages the size of bowling balls. While the Waste Water division regularly maintains hundreds of miles of city pipe, trying to clear grease blockages pulls the team off the important task of upgrading the network's infrastructure. If you are uncertain what size grease trap or maintenance is needed, please give us a call.



pour grease into a metal can  
or foil-lined bag. let it cool and  
throw it in the garbage.



## Septic System To City Sanitary Sewer

About 1,000 Hampton households use septic systems. Because failed septic systems pollute local rivers and cause other health concerns, Wastewater Operations hopes to extend city service to at least two areas in the city each year.

## Community Pride

The Waste Water division maintains more than 100 pump stations that serve neighborhoods and businesses. To improve their appearance, we're phasing in landscaping and making improvements — inside and out. If, for any reason you have a concern about a pump station near you, please don't hesitate to contact us.

before improvements



after improvements



## Construction

When new subdivisions or businesses are built, the increased demand on the city's wastewater system often requires new pump stations and pipes. Some parts of the system are more than 70 years old. Re-lining and replacing pipes, building new pipe intersections and other projects are part of our upgrade program. About 30% of our time is dedicated to new construction; another 30% is spent on upgrades. We try to provide this service with a minimum of disruption to customers.



Most repairs take four to 12 hours. It takes a few days to let material settle before asphalt or concrete can be poured. Including topsoil and grass seeds — it takes about two weeks to complete the process. With new extensions our crews can generally complete 30 to 200 feet a day, depending on the depth of the work, weather and overall length. Pump stations take about 45 days to complete digging a well, pouring a slab, putting the building in place and installing electrical and control panels.

## Fees

Your sewer fee is based on your household's water usage which is determined by meter readings every two months. A flat fee is multiplied per 750 gallon usage. User fees appear on the Newport News Waterworks bill. The fee, in place since 1980, helps pay for maintenance, repair and replacement of the city's sanitary sewer system. Anyone who receives a water bill in Hampton also receives the wastewater fee; this includes single family homes, condos, and apartments. There are no exemptions or reductions due to age, income or disability. Conserving water may save money. There are no additional fees to respond to stoppages, though we do charge a special fee to connect to city sewer. Costs vary depending on frontage, existing sewer, and other logistical considerations.

NEWPORT NEWS WATERWORKS	
P.O. Box 907 Newport News, VA 23607	
ACCOUNT NUMBER: 0105456	ACCOUNT NUMBER: 7091004
NAME: Citizen, John Q. 123 Main Street Hampton, VA 23069	DUPLICATE LABEL DATE DUE: 09/21/2004
BILLING INFORMATION	
From: 04/15/2004 To: 04/15/2004	DATE: 04/15/2004
PROPOSED READINGS	LAST BILL AMOUNT
Previous Reading: 670	62.00
Current Reading: 545	62.00
Usage: 125 Gallons in 60 days (60%)	Conservation & Other Act:
Minimum Monthly Usage Per Day: 10	45.00
CURRENT RATES	
Water: 2.42/1000	Service Charge: 7.50
WPF Sewer: 1.50/1000	Water Saver: 16.70
WPF Sewer: 1.50/1000	Water Protection Cr: 6.11
WPF S/W Non-Recycling: 16.00/1000	TOTAL Waterworks Charges: 22.35
No Summer Connection Chg - Thank	WPF Sewer Fee Maintenance: 4.00
	WPF Sewer Fee Disposal: 4.00
	WPF Sewer Fee Credit: 1.00
	WPF Sewer Fee Credit: 444.10
	TOTAL Current Charges: 466.18
Charges calculated at new rate. Credit has been given for charges used at old rate.	TOTAL PAYMENT DUE: 466.18

## Technology At Work

Hampton's Waste Water Division inspects pipes by robotic video camera. With a "cured in place method," some repairs can be made without having to break ground. By installing a sleeve or liner, the team can add several years to a pipe's life.



The Division is mapping the entire wastewater network of pipes, pump stations, manholes, and sewer taps using a Global Positioning Satellite. This helps schedule maintenance and locate trouble spots. Personnel are highly trained—for emergencies, working in enclosed spaces and using new technology.



## Understanding Three Systems That Serve You

- 1** Newport News Waterworks supplies water to your house, which is billed according to usage. Local reservoirs serve peninsula customers, and all the water that enters your house is treated to a high (drinkable) standard. Newport News Waterworks: 926-1000
- 2** Hampton's storm water system collects rain and channels it, untreated, directly to local waterways. Litter, oil, grease, grit, pet waste and other pollutants that enter the system harms water quality in nearby rivers and creeks.
- 3** Wastewater is used water from all indoor plumbing—toilets, showers, sinks and washing machines. Unless you're on a septic system, your wastewater enters city pipes on its way to a Hampton Roads Sanitation District facility, where it's treated and released to the James River.



**Phone 311 to report  
a waste water issue.**

Dial 727-8311 if outside city limits  
or from a cell phone.

## DID YOU KNOW...?

**The City of Hampton has 465 miles of wastewater pipes. If lined up and stretched out, they would reach New York City.**

**Public Works  
Wastewater Operations  
727-8410**

