



HOMEOWNER'S GUIDE TO GRINDER PUMPS

Town of Greenwich Sewer Division ■ Grass Island Wastewater Treatment Plant (203) 622-0963

? WHAT it is: A low-pressure sewer acts much like a water system, in reverse. Each home has a pump (provided by the Town), which pumps to a small diameter pipe in the street, following the existing grades. These lines are typically no more than 4 feet deep. The key element in this system is an Environment One Grinder Pump. The tanks collect all effluent from the house. The solid materials are then ground to a small size suitable for pumping as a slurry with the effluent water. The pump generates sufficient pressure to pump this slurry from your home to a wastewater treatment receiving line.

? HOW to be cautious: It is not advisable to plant flowers or shrubs or place items as fences, decorative pilings, fishponds, etc. near the grinder pump as damage to the grinder pump, underground electrical or piping system may occur. Grinder pumps have a small breather vent located on the side of the tank. It is important to keep this vent open and free from debris to achieve optimal results. It is important to have the ground sloped away from the tank so water will not pool and enter the vent, preventing operational procedures.

? WHO is responsible:

- Homeowners—Please maintain access to the pump control box and the pump chamber. Caution will be exercised while work is being conducted. However, please note that the Town will not be responsible for any damage to landscaping while performing any maintenance function. Please exercise caution when digging in the area—locate lines first!
- The Town Sewer Division—If your pump fails, the Town Sewer Division will replace it. Do not call your plumber or electrician for pump failure response. However, please note that The Town Sewer Division will not be responsible for clogged laterals; it is the homeowner's responsibility.

CAUTION! What to do in case...

- **The alarm sounds.** If there is a grinder pump failure, the tank which contains the pump will become too full. An alarm horn and light located in the alarm disconnect panel will automatically turn on.
 - You Should:
 - Discontinue water use to prevent overflows.
 - Turn off the alarm by depressing the alarm silence switch on the outside of the alarm disconnect panel. The alarm horn should be silenced, but the light will remain on until pump is repaired.
 - Wait 15min. A high level of water usage will sometimes cause the alarm to come on. This situation is self-correcting. If the pump is operating correctly, it will pump the level down and the alarm will turn off.
 - If ALARM LIGHT IS STILL ON AFTER 15min., contact the Grass Island Wastewater Treatment Plant at (203) 622-0963. Follow the recorded instructions for a “sewer emergency.” Town Sewer Division Staff will respond as quickly as possible.
 - NEVER attempt to open the tank cover or the electrical panel box. CAUTION: Electrical shock or damage to the system may occur.

- **Of a power issue.** If there is a power issue (power failure, inappropriate voltage, etc.) which affects your home, your grinder pump will also experience a loss of power and will not be able to operate. Please be aware that the grinder pump tank has a certain amount of holding capacity. However, please limit your interior water use until power has been restored.
- **You're on vacation.** If you are away for more than 7 days, the following steps will minimize the potential for any stagnating odors:
 - First, run water from an inside tap long enough for the grinder pump to begin working.
 - After, the pump turns on, turn off the water. The grinder pump will run until the tank is empty and will shut off. This process will cleanse the pump and leave it filled with a minimum of clean water.
 - Always leave the electrical power on. This allows the heating element inside the pump to operate which helps eliminate condensation and freezing.
- **You want to initiate a shutdown.** Please contact the Grass Island Wastewater Treatment Plant initially before committing the shut down. If the situation is urgent and an initiated shut down is necessary, please shut the breaker in the house. Afterwards, immediately contact the Grass Island Wastewater Treatment Plant.



PROTECT YOUR PUMP! The grinder pump can handle any wastewater that is normally discharged to the sewer from the kitchen, bathroom or laundry. Some chemicals and materials may cause operating problems or safety hazards. It is advisable to check the labels on the chemicals prior to their disposal. NEVER connect a sump pump to the grinder pump.

CAUTION: Never put any of the following materials into sinks, toilets or drains:

- Glass, metal, wood, seafood shells, aquarium rocks/gravel
- Plastic objects (toys, eating utensils, etc.)
- Any strong chemical, toxic, caustic, or poisonous substance
- Degreasing solvents
- Any explosive or flammable material
- Gasoline, kerosene, fuel oil, paint thinner, antifreeze
- Lubricating oil or grease
- Cooking fat (lard, oil, grease)
- Rubber gloves or other disposable gloves
- Sanitary wipes (e.g. baby wipes), disposable floor wipes, disposable toilet bowl scrubbers
- Sanitary napkins or tampons

These materials may clog your home system or create unsafe conditions in your lines and tank. Most importantly, these items can cause pump failure.