

Harry Kim
Mayor

Roy Takemoto
Managing Director



William A. Kucharski
Director

Diane A. Noda
Deputy Director

County of Hawai'i

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

345 Kekūanāo'a Street, Suite 41 · Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

Ph: (808) 961-8083 · Fax: (808) 961-8086

Email: cohdem@hawaiicounty.gov

NEWS RELEASE

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Environmental Management's Plea: Please do not Flush "Flushable" Wipes

Keeping Hawai'i County's sewer systems up and running is crucial during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, which is why people should not flush wipes and paper towels.

These commercial products contribute to line-blocking, and the increasing use of these products make the problem much worse and at the worst time, according to Bill Kucharski, Director of Environmental Management.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, there has been a significant increase in the use of cleansing wipes in homes and offices. Although the packaging states that the wipes are "flushable," they should not be flushed.

"These wipes are made with micro-plastics and do not dissolve in the waste water," Kucharski said. "They stay whole after being flushed."

Additionally, the structure of the wipes lends itself to clinging to and catching on rough pipe interiors and in pump stations, which push waste water to the sewage treatment plants.

Kucharski said this can result in the ultimate blockage of the sewer, and a blocked sewer can then cause your toilet and drains to backup. Wipes do not act like toilet paper in the waste water, he said.

Kucharski appealed to people to dispose of the wipes in regular waste containers and not in your toilets.

"The people who work every day keeping our sewer systems working need your help now more than ever, and so please dispose of these wipes in your trash, not in your toilets, Kucharski said.

For further information, please call Environmental Management at 961-8083.