

NUTS AND BOLTS . . .

TECHNICAL DETAILS

A fiberglass or high-density polyethylene wastewater holding tank has been installed underground on your property and wastewater grinder pumps are housed in the tank. The tank cover is round and is the only part that shows above the ground. All of the wastewater from your home flows into the buried tank. When the tank fills to a pre-set level, the grinder pump automatically turns on, grinds the waste, and forces it out of the tank and into the wastewater system.

The grinder pump normally will run for one or two minutes and will automatically turn off when the tank has been emptied. The pump is programmed to operate in cycles, rather than continuously. Cycles are determined by the amount of water used, usually after 20 gallons has entered the tank. During a usual day, the grinder pump will turn on and off to empty the tank 10 to 20 times.

The grinder pump is powered by electricity and is connected to the electric service lines usually at a panel box near your electric meter on the outside wall of your home. However, some are located on a panel inside the home. Grinder pump electricity charges are estimated to be less than a dollar per month and will be included on your monthly electric bill. The cost of electricity is paid by you, not the County.

IN CASE OF POWER FAILURE

If there is a power failure which affects your home, your grinder pump will also experience a loss of power and not be able to operate. The grinder pump tank has a certain amount of holding capacity, but interior water use should be severely limited until power has been restored.

WHILE ON VACATION

If you will be away from home for more than several days, the following steps should be taken to minimize the potential for the development of stagnating odors:

First, run water from an inside tap long enough for the grinder pump to begin working. After the pump turns on, turn the water off. 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.

By following these guidelines, you can ensure that your low-pressure system will provide many years of safe, reliable service.



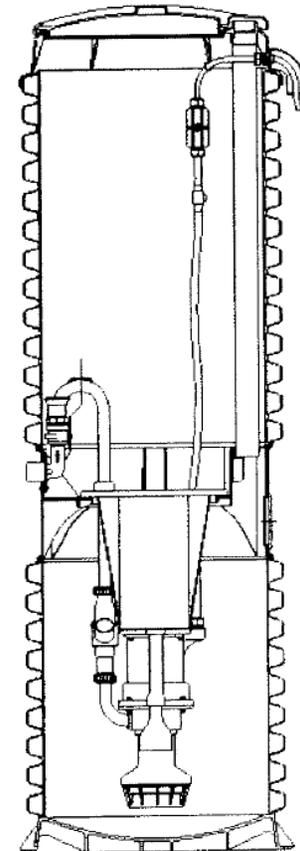
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BRUNSWICK COUNTY

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

Grinder Pump Station Homeowner Information



ABOUT YOUR GRINDER PUMP ...

The low-pressure wastewater system servicing your home is part of the larger Brunswick County wastewater collection system. Every day of the year hundreds of miles of pipe carry wastewater to the reclamation facilities operated by the Department of Public Utilities.

The grinder pump in your yard is an important part of the system. The Department of Public Utilities uses several types of collection systems. Each has been designed to best serve the customer in a particular area. Your home is one served by a low-pressure system, which uses a grinder pump to grind the wastewater from your home (much like the garbage disposal in your kitchen) and push the wastewater through small plastic pipes to the larger line in the street.

Low-pressure wastewater systems are economical solutions for areas of the County that cannot be served by gravity lines. However, a grinder pump system does require that the homeowner take a more active role than required for a property served by gravity sewer.

It is important that you know how your home sewer system operates and that you notify the Department of Public Utilities emergency dispatchers if a problem occurs. Our technicians provide maintenance and service; however, there may be service charges for pump repair and/or replacement.

County-installed grinder pumps are placed in a 15-foot utility easement to provide access for maintenance and service. It is not advisable to plant flowers or shrubs or place such items as fences, decorative pilings, fish ponds, etc. within the easement as damage to the grinder pump, underground electrical or piping systems may occur. The County will not be responsible for any damage to landscaping of items placed within the easement while performing any maintenance function. Also, electrical power and alarm wires are buried under the ground between the control panel and the tank. Before digging in the area, call to have a technician locate the lines.

Many grinder models have a small breather vent located on the side of the tank, just below the cover. It is important to keep this vent open and free of debris, such as mulch or grass, for the unit to remain operational. It is also helpful to have the ground sloped away from the tank so water will not pool and enter the vent rendering the unit inoperable.

With your cooperation, your low-pressure system will provide many years of safe, reliable service. Please take a few moments to read the following information to ensure the proper functioning of your pump.

IF 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 box on the outside of your home will automatically turn on.

You should...

- Discontinue water use to prevent overflows.
- Turn off the alarm by depressing the alarm light on the front of the alarm box. The alarm horn should silence, but the light will remain on until the grinder pump is repaired.
- Wait 15 minutes before taking further action. 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, the wet well will automatically be pumped down and the alarm light will turn off.
- If the alarm light is still on after 15 minutes, during normal business hours call the Public Utilities dispatcher at (910) 253-2657. For 24-hour emergency service call (910) 371-3490 or (910) 755-7921. County emergency crews are on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week and will respond promptly.
- Never attempt to open the tank cover of the electrical panel box.

CAUTION: Electrical shock or damage to the system may occur.

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 labels on 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—they may clog your system or create an unsafe environment:

- Glass, metal, wood, seafood shells
- Papers, socks, rags, or cloth of any kind
- 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, and antifreeze
- Lubricating oil or grease
- Cooking fat (lard, oil, grease)
- Hair clippings