

# Wipes Are Not Flushable



## PLEASE SUPPORT SB23-150

Metro Water Recovery supports SB23-150, which would require "Do Not Flush" labeling on select wipe packaging in Colorado.

Non-flushable wipes -- including wipes used for changing diapers, personal hygiene, and housecleaning -- do not break down as they travel through the sewer system. This causes clogs and blockages that have adverse impacts on:

- Operations
- Worker safety
- Environment

## OPERATIONAL IMPACTS

Metro's facilities are designed to treat domestic wastewater, and disposable wipes cause undue stress on our collection and treatment systems. Disposable wipes often snag in sewer pipes, catch passing debris and grease, and clog pipes, requiring costly and dangerous sewer bypasses while the blockage is removed.

Wipe fragments also tend to stick together and build up in certain parts of the treatment plants like pipes, pumps, and digesters. By requiring more frequent teardowns of pumps, unclogging of pipes, cleanouts of tanks, and related activities, this excess work:

- Causes undue downtime
- Incurs costs in labor and repairs
- Requires more redundancy of equipment



Wipes mix with rags and debris to clog pipes and equipment at the Robert W. Hite Treatment Facility (left) and Northern Treatment Plant (NTP) (right).



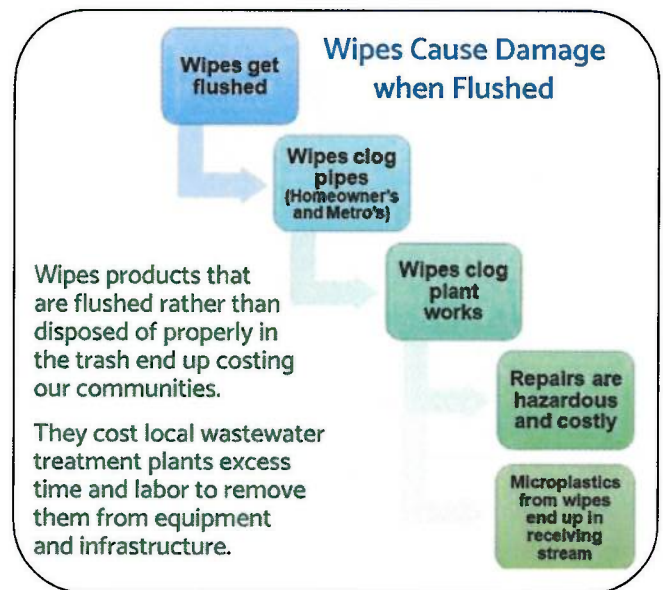
Employees suit up to enter and manually remove wipes and rags from a gravity thickener at the NTP.

## WORKER SAFETY

Unclogging and repairing equipment damaged by wipes may require multiple employees and can be dangerous. This work exposes Metro's workers to biological hazards and the dangers of confined space entry to remove these non-flushable wipes from critical equipment and tanks in our processes.

## ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Non-flushable wipes have been found to release microplastic fibers into an aquatic environment. Wastewater treatment facilities are not equipped to handle these microfibers. Research suggests that the addition of extra plastic fibers introduced into the sewer system may contribute to microplastics in our environment.



## CONTACT

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