

The Grinder Pump

In Loudoun County, wastewater is collected and treated in many ways. Most wastewater collection relies on the force of gravity to pull it through miles of pipe, ending at a wastewater treatment facility. Since not every area in the County can benefit from gravity, some areas rely on a pressure system or a pump to facilitate wastewater collection. Pumps can serve one household or many households.

Your home is one of approximately 300 homes served by Loudoun Water that has its own wastewater pump.

The grinder pump that facilitates wastewater removal from your home is owned and maintained by Loudoun Water. The pump is located in a utility easement so that we can provide maintenance and service to it at no additional cost to you. However, a grinder pump system does require that you take a more active role than residents served by a gravity system.

The Grinder System and your Grinder Pump Service Connection are defined in Loudoun Water's Grinder Pump Standing Operating Procedure (SOP). The SOP can be found at www.loudounwater.org. Should the Grinder System be compromised by unauthorized products (see Protecting Your Pump in this brochure), Loudoun Water will maintain/repair the Grinder System and issue a warning notice to the Resident User, person(s) registered as a sewer customer of Loudoun Water and responsible for payment of invoices rendered for said service. Upon subsequent occurrences, Loudoun Water will charge the Resident User a fee in accordance with Loudoun Water policies.

Going on Vacation

If you will be away from your home for seven days or more, there is a step you can take to minimize odors. Ideally, you want to replace the wastewater in the tank with clean water. To do this, run an inside faucet for about 10 minutes or 30 gallons, just long enough for the grinder pump to begin working. To verify that the pump is running, it may be necessary to go outside near the pump and listen for it to start.

After the pump starts, turn the faucet off. The grinder pump will run until the tank is empty and shut off automatically.

This process will cleanse the pump and keep it filled with a minimum amount of clean water. Always leave the power on, because a heating element inside the pump helps eliminate condensation and freezing. If you have any questions, you may call or email us at:



44865 Loudoun Water Way

PO Box 4000

Ashburn, VA 20146

Customer Service: 571.291.7880

After Hours: 571.291.7878

Fax 703.729.9494

www.loudounwater.org

UNDERSTANDING

YOUR

GRINDER

PUMP



How It Works

Your grinder pump is located inside a holding tank made of polyethylene plastic. The tank is installed in the ground on your property. What you see is just the green cover of the tank. All of the wastewater generated in your home flows into this tank. When the wastewater in the tank reaches a preset level, the grinder pump automatically turns on, grinds the waste, and forces it out of the tank and into the Loudoun Water wastewater collection system.

The grinder pump will normally run for one or two minutes and automatically turn off when the tank is 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, your grinder pump will turn on. On a typical day, this cycle will repeat itself 10 to 20 times.

The grinder pump is powered by electricity and is connected to the electric service lines at a black or gray box located on the outside of your house. Electricity charges for your grinder pump are typically less than one dollar per month and are included in your monthly electric bill.



Protecting Your Pump

Your grinder pump can handle any wastewater normally discharged to the sewer from the kitchen, bathroom, or laundry. However, some chemicals and materials may cause operating problems or safety hazards. Check the labels on all chemicals before using. Never pour the following items down your drains or flush them in toilets:

- Cooking fat (oil, grease, lard)
- Any explosive or flammable material
- Any strong chemical or toxic, caustic, or poisonous substance
- Degreasing solvents
- Diapers, socks, rags, sanitary napkins, or cloth of any kind
- Gasoline, kerosene, fuel oil, paint thinner, or antifreeze
- Lubricating oil or grease
- Metal, plastic, or latex objects (toys, utensils, condoms, etc.)
- Seafood shells, animal bones, or cat litter
- Biohazardous Materials

These will clog your system and create unsafe conditions in your lines and tank.

Connection of a sump pump or roof drains to your grinder pump is prohibited. This type of connection will raise your electric rates and shorten the life of your grinder pump. Sump pump discharge and roof drains connect to the storm drain system.

Also, please avoid running your lawn mower or vehicle over the lid. The green lids are fragile and may break. Customers are responsible for the cost of replacement lids. Please do not cover the lid with mulch, dirt, stone, automobiles, fences, decks, or other obstruction that would prevent its removal in an emergency, or the lid's ability to vent air.

Grinder Pump Alarm

Your grinder pump is fitted with an alarm in case of failure. If there is a failure, the tank that contains the pump will become too full and the alarm and light, located on the black/gray box will automatically turn on. If the alarm sounds, please follow these important steps:

- ✓ Discontinue water use to prevent overflows.
- ✓ Silence the alarm by pressing the silence button on the bottom of the alarm box. The light will remain on.
- ✓ Wait 15 minutes before taking further action. A high water level will sometimes cause the alarm to go on. This situation is often self-correcting and the holding tank will automatically pump down.
- ✓ If 15 minutes have passed and the alarm light is still on, call Customer Service at 571.291.7880 or call 571.291.7878 if it's after hours.
- ✓ Never attempt to open the tank cover or the electrical panel box.

Emergency crews are on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week and will respond promptly. A defective unit will immediately be replaced. Damaged units may be repaired for use at another time.

Loudoun Water offers maintenance for, but does not own, the components associated with the Grinder Pump Service Connection. Therefore, Loudoun Water is not responsible for any property damage which may result from failure of any Grinder Pump Service Connection component.