

In The Event of a Power Failure

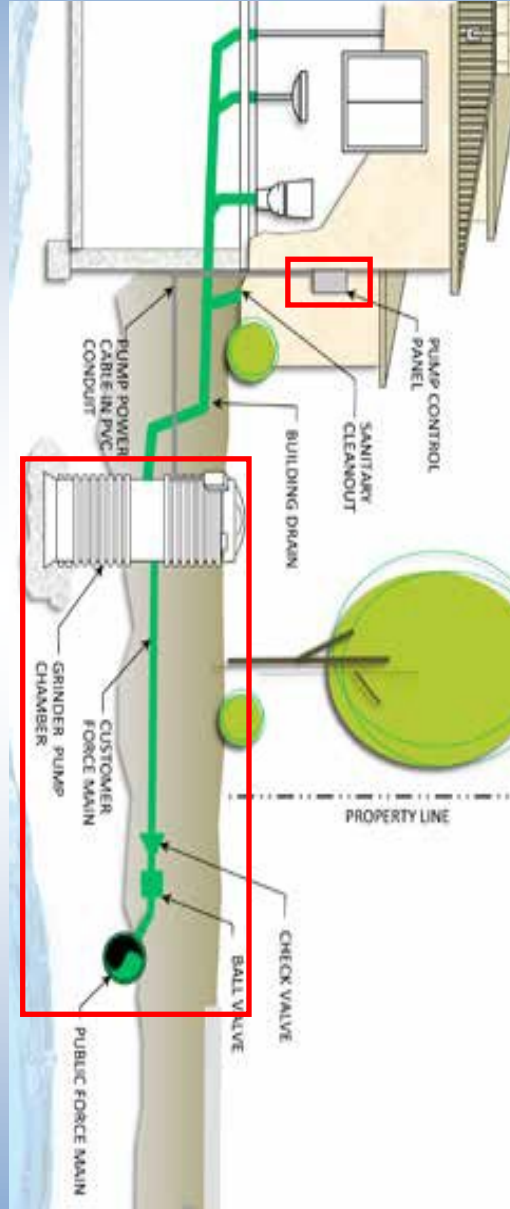
Your grinder pump cannot operate without electrical power. Although the grinder pump wet well has a certain amount of holding capacity, if electrical power service is interrupted keep water usage to a minimum to prevent the system from backing up. Without power the alarm will not sound and there will be no warning of a possible sewage overflow.

Going on Vacation

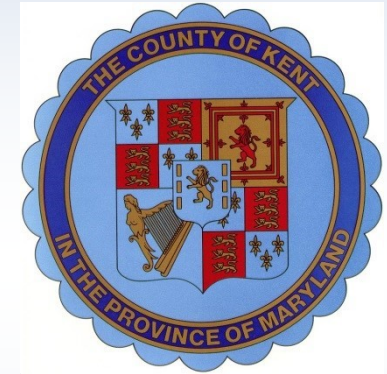
If you will be away from your home for seven days or more, there is a step you can take to minimize odors and reduce the risk of damage to your home. Ideally, you want to replace the wastewater in the tank with clean water. To do this, run an inside faucet for about 10 minutes or 30 gallons, just long 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 many of the pumps helps eliminate condensation and freezing. This may also help to protect your home from flooding should a plumbing failure or leak develop while you're away.

The components outlined in red in the image above are Kent County's service responsibility.



KENT COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS DIVISION OF WATER & WASTEWATER SERVICES



UNDERSTANDING YOUR GRINDER PUMP

ANSWERS TO MOST COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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. These could clog or damage your system or create unsafe conditions in your lines and tank.

Never pour the following items down your drains or flush them in the toilet:

- 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 thinners, or antifreeze
- Lubricating oil or grease
- Metal, plastic, or latex objects (toys, utensils, condoms, etc.)
- Seafood shells, animal bones, or cat litter
- Biohazardous Material
- Disposable Wipes (including those that state flushable or biodegradable)

Sump pump and roof drains discharging to your building drain and into the grinder pump chamber are prohibited. These types of connections will cause your pump to run excessively, which will raise your electric costs and may shorten the life of your grinder pump. Also, please avoid running your lawn mower or vehicle over the green lid. The green lid is fragile and may break. Customers are responsible for the cost of replacement lids. Please do not cover the lid with mulch, dirt, or stone. We ask that you maintain a 10 foot radius around the pump clear of obstruction to allow maintenance of the pump at all times.

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 pump control panel 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 pump control panel 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 **Kent County Department of Public Works, Water and Wastewater Division 24 Hours a Day, 7 Days a Week: 410-778-3287***
- 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 repaired or replaced.

The grinder pump and components that facilitate wastewater removal from your home are owned by the County. Kent County provides service for the grinder pump and electrical controls, as well as the sewer service line from the main line to the grinder pump pit (see info-graphic). As the homeowner, you are responsible for the sewer line from the grinder pump pit to your home, and for the cost of any damage done to the facilities beyond normal wear and tear. All repairs will be performed in a professional manner with minimal disturbance to the property. The property will be restored to its pre-existing condition, however the County will not repair or replace any obstructions which impede reasonable access to the facilities.

The grinder pump system you are connecting to is a standard County collection system that the Department of Public Works has been operating for over twenty-five years throughout the County.

How It Works

In order to provide you with suitable wastewater disposal your home is served by a low pressure sewer system. The grinder pump in your yard is a key element of this system.

This department uses several types of collection systems. Each has been designed to best serve the customer in a particular area. Topography, the physical features of the earth, plays an important role in design selection. In areas such as yours where it is uphill or flat and therefore cannot be served by gravity lines, pumps are used to force sewage along the lines to the pump station and treatment plant.

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 at the surface 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 into the County wastewater collection system. The grinder pump will normally run for one or two minutes and automatically turns 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 have 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 utility service at the grinder pump control panel mounted on the outside of your house. Grinder pump electricity charges are estimated to be less than one dollar per day for a family of four and will be included on your monthly electric bill. The cost of electricity is paid by you not by the County.