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Grinder Pumps: *Frequently Asked Questions*



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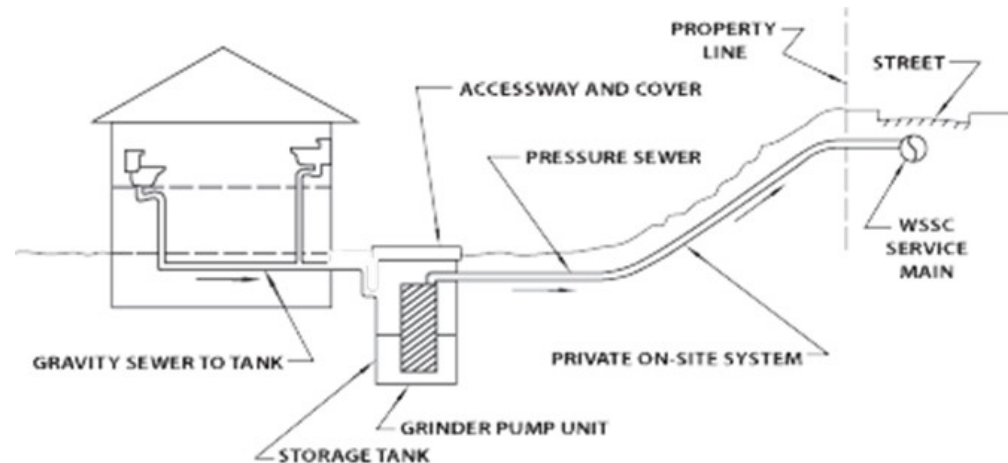


516 Village Rd
Leland, NC 28451

Mission Statement

H2GO is committed to assuring a quality of life for our valued customers by providing the highest levels of water and sanitary sewer services, from Source to Stream, in a safe and efficient manner.

As professional service providers, H2GO in cooperation with its community partners will comprehensively plan, develop, maintain and operate the District's utility systems in a customer service oriented and cost-effective manner.



Q: What is a Grinder Pump?

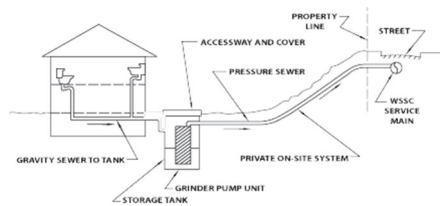
A: A grinder pump is a pump unit located in a fiberglass tank installed at a low point below your household plumbing. A grinder pump works much like a household garbage disposal, but on a larger scale. It grinds up wastewater generated in your home (i.e. toilet use, shower, washing machine, sink drains, etc.) and pumps it into the public sewer system.

Q: How does the grinder pump system work?

A: A grinder pump is placed in a tank that is buried in a convenient outdoor location on a homeowner's property. The tank provides wastewater holding storage capacity. When water is used in the house, wastewater flows into the tank. When the wastewater in the tank reaches a pre-set level, the grinder pump automatically turns on, grinds the waste, and pumps it out of the tank via the homeowner's on-site pressure sewer line and into the public sewer system. A grinder pump will normally run for about 15 minutes and automatically turn off when the tank is emptied. The pump is powered by electricity and is connected to a control panel installed near your grinder pump tank.

Q: Why do some homes need grinder pumps?

A: In most instances, wastewater flows by gravity from a building sewer (lateral connection) to a public sewer main. However, because of elevation, gravity sewers may not work in all instances. In situations where a home's sewer service line leaves the building at a lower elevation than the public sewer main, a grinder pump is sometimes used to grind and pump wastewater to the main. See below diagram.



Q: What is the size of the line from the grinder pump to H2GO's service main

A: The low-pressure sewer is typically 1½" diameter.

Q: What is the flow rate of the pump?

A: The grinder unit will pump about 10 gallons (+/-) per minute.

Q: What is the duration of pump operation per day?

A: Typical operation is about 15 minutes per day for typical residential houses. Depending on water usage, the pump may run once a day, twice a day, or once every other day.

Q: How noisy is the pump?

A: With an outdoor unit buried in the ground, you will probably not hear it at all if you are 10 feet away. If you're standing on top of the tank, it sounds like your washing machine when it's running – just a hum.

Q: Who is responsible for the grinder pump system?

A: The homeowner is responsible for the pump system from the house to the property line. Customer-owned grinder pump systems include the small diameter pressure sewer from the property line to the pump basin, the pump, valves and valve boxes on the small diameter force main, pump tank, electrical panel, and associated appurtenances. The gravity service line from the building to the pump tank, electrical connections to the pump system, and generators connected to the pump power supply are also considered part of the customer-owned pump system. H2GO's responsibility for sewer service begins after the property line in the public right-of-way.

Q: Who is responsible for maintenance on the grinder pump system?

A: Other than warranty issues, the homeowner is responsible for maintenance on the pump system. H2GO is not responsible for maintaining any customer-owned pump system that is connected to or discharges into any public sewer. Upon the request of the customer, H2GO may repair or maintain a customer-owned pump system that discharges into any public sewer that has been installed pursuant to H2GO specifications. All maintenance and repair costs are the customer's responsibility.

Q: What are the warranty periods for the grinder pumps and control panels?

A: For grinder pump units installed under the new grinder pump policy effective 3/10/2015, the pumps will carry a 24 month factory warranty from the date of installation. The control panel will carry a 12 month factory warranty from the date of delivery. These warranties do not cover lightning strikes. Repair costs due to negligence or misuse of the pump system will not be covered under the warranty. Negligence or misuse includes violations of the H2GO Sewer Use Rules and Regulations, and/or disposing of sand, rock, gravel, metal, grease, feminine products or any other substance that cannot reasonably be expected to be pumped without damaging or rendering inoperable the customer-owned pump system.

Q: What can I do to protect my grinder pump?

A: A properly maintained grinder pump should be able to handle wastewater from the kitchen, bathroom, laundry, etc. However, some chemicals and substances can adversely impact a grinder pump and may cause safety hazards. Please check the labels on all chemicals before using or disposing. Never put any of the following materials into sinks, toilets or drains as they can clog your home system and create unsafe conditions in your lines and tank:

Cooking fat, lard, oil or grease; Degreasing Solvents; Cigarette butts; Dental Floss; Sanitary napkins, tampons or diapers; Q-Tips; Sanitary wipes such as baby wipes or disposable floor wipes; Hair clippings; Cat litter; Strong chemical, toxic, caustic, or poisonous substance; Explosive or flammable materials; Glass, metal, wood, eggshells, seafood shells, coffee beans, aquarium rocks or gravel; Plastic Objects; Rubber gloves or other disposable gloves; Fireplace ashes.

It is not advisable to plant flowers or shrubs or place such items as fences, decorative pilings, fish ponds, etc. within the immediate area as damage to the pump, underground electrical or piping systems may occur. Electrical power and alarm wires are buried under the ground between the control panel and the tank. Before digging in the area, you should contact H2GO to have a technician locate the underground lines.

*****Never connect a sump pump to the grinder pump system. Doing so is a violation of H2GO's Sewer Use Rules and Regulations; it will reduce the sewer main flow capacity; and it will shorten the life of your grinder pump.*****

Q: How do I properly maintain my grinder pump?

A: In addition to the previously provided tips, please follow the manufacturer's Owner's Manual. In the event you have misplaced the Owner's Manual, only two types of grinder pumps are currently approved for use in the H2GO service area:

Compass Pointe Service Area – Zoeller E7020 Progressing Cavity Grinder Pump

H2GO Service Area outside of Compass Pointe – Zoeller E7011 Reversible Grinder Pump

Local manufacturer's representative – Shallotte Electric Stores, 4900 South Main Street, PO Box 2267, Shallotte, NC 28459.

[910-754 6000](tel:910-754-6000)

www.shallotteelectric.com

Q: What should I do if my grinder pump alarm goes off?

A: If there is too much flow going into your grinder pump unit or if the pump has failed to start, the high sewage level will automatically trigger an alarm horn and light to alert

you of the problem. You should take the following steps:

1. Immediately discontinue your water use to prevent an overflow.
2. Turn off the alarm by touching the alarm silence pad indicated on the side of the control panel. The alarm horn should silence but the light will remain on.
3. Wait fifteen minutes. 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 tank will automatically be pumped down and the alarm light will turn off.
4. If the alarm light is still on after fifteen minutes, contact H2GO On-Call Emergency Services at [910-367-2084](tel:910-367-2084).
5. Never attempt to open the tank cover or the electrical panel box.

CAUTION: Electrical shock or damage to the system may occur

Q: What should I do if there is a power outage?

A: Your grinder pump is powered by electricity and will not function during a power outage. In order to prevent waste from backing up into the lowest sink, tub, or toilet in your home, severely limit the interior use of water until power is restored. This means do not shower or wash dishes and limit flushing the toilet. While your holding tank has a limited capacity, if the system was already full and ready to pump just before the power went out, there will be even less storage available.

Q: What should I do with my grinder pump when I go on vacation?

A: If you plan on being away for an extended period of time, replace the wastewater in the tank with clean water to help minimize odors. First run water from an inside faucet long enough for the grinder pump to start working. After the pump starts, turn the inside faucet off. The pump will run until the tank is empty and shut off automatically. This process will cleanse the pump and leave it filled with a minimum of clean water. Always leave the power to the pump on.

Q: Who should I contact with other questions or concerns?

A: Please contact:

Brunswick Regional Water & Sewer H2GO

Bob Walker, Executive Director

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[910-371-9949](tel:910-371-9949)

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H2GO Emergency On-Call Services

[910-367-2084](tel:910-367-2084)