

# UNDERSTANDING YOUR **GRINDER PUMP**

Savannah Ridge Homeowners Association

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 can benefit from gravity, some areas rely on a pressure system or a pump to facilitate wastewater collection.

Your home is one of several that have its own pump. The big round cylinder sticking out of the ground in your yard is your Grinder Pump. This pump grinds the solids in the wastewater from your home just as your garbage disposal grinds food in your kitchen sink. Then the pump pushes the wastewater through a small pipe on your property to the larger pipes of the gravity system.

Although the grinder pump that facilitates wastewater removal from your home is very reliable and needs no routine maintenance, a grinder pump system does require that you take a more active role than residents served by a gravity system.

## **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 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 box located near your electric meter on the outside of your house. Electricity charges for your grinder pump are typically less than one dollar per month.

## **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 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 Haynes Equipment Company at 913-782-5013
- *Never attempt to open the tank cover or the electrical panel box.*

## 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 or lard)
- Any explosive or flammable material
- Any strong chemical or toxic, caustic or poisonous substance.
- Degreasing solvents
- Diapers, socks, rags or cloth of any kind
- Gasoline, kerosene, fuel oil, paint thinner or antifreeze
- Lubricating oil or grease
- Plastic objects (toys, utensils e t c .)
- Seafood shells

These will clog your system and create unsafe condition in your lines and tank. | Haynes Equipment - *also recommends that you use liquid laundry detergent rather than powder as the powder does not completely dissolve and will shorten the life of your grinder pump.*

Please do not connect a sump pump to the drain lines on your grinder pump. This type of connection will raise your electric rates and shorten the life of your grinder pump.

## 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 10 minutes or about 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.

## 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 will 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.