

The wastewater treatment process

That flush may be the end for you, but for us, it's only where we get started.

On an average day, you'll likely use about 75 to 100 gallons of water. After you flush a toilet, brush your teeth, wash clothes, or take a shower, that "used" water leaves your house, but it doesn't go away.

King County works with your local sewer agency to take the sewage from your home or workplace, clean it, recycle it, and return it safely to the environment.

Sewage travels through miles of pipelines before entering a treatment plant.



Local Sewer Pipes

Water & Solids

Regional Sewer Pipes & Pumps

Overflows of sewage and stormwater can sometimes occur in older areas of Seattle during heavy rains. Though these combined sewer overflows (CSOs) are 90 percent stormwater, they can impact water quality and pose public health risks. King County has a program to control CSOs and meet water quality standards set by Department of Ecology.

Once at the treatment plant, trash and dirt are removed and taken to a landfill.

The organic solids, made up of human waste and food waste, are removed from the water through natural biological processes that use bacteria, oxygen and settling tanks to separate the water from the solids.

REGIONAL WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANTS



Clean Water

Additional treatment

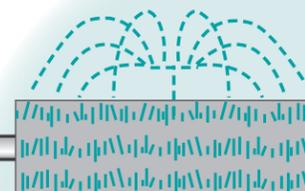
PUGET SOUND

All organic solids removed from the water are treated in a separate biological process that creates nutrient-rich biosolids, which can be used as a fertilizer and soil amendment. Waste gas from the digester process is captured, scrubbed and turned into natural gas or electricity.

Energy Recovery



Biosolids Recycling



Reclaimed Water

The treated water is then disinfected and either returned to Puget Sound or treated further for industrial or irrigation uses.

RECYCLED & REUSED PRODUCTS

Protecting water quality starts with you



Don't trash the system. Putting trash in toilets and drains can clog our pipes and damage our pumping equipment.

Think 'green' when you can. Choosing environmentally friendly, biodegradable household cleaning and personal care products minimizes the entry of harmful chemicals into the environment.



Disconnect. Too much water in the system creates overflows and pollutes the environment – disconnect downspouts from the sewer system and redirect them to lawns and gardens.

Conserve. Conserving water reduces your monthly bill and prevents excess water from entering the system, so there's less to treat.