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Attention New South Wales Media

FATBERG PUBLIC WARNING:

DO NOT FLUSH DISPOSABLE WIPES DOWN STRATA PLUMBING IN NSW

STRATA SUPPORTS SYDNEY WATER ON “FATBERGS”

The strata sector is supporting Sydney Water's warning not to flush disposable wipes down drains or other forms of plumbing this week over concerns of the wipes being linked to fatbergs.

The peak body for the Strata sector, Strata Community Association, (NSW) says wipes are clogging strata plumbing in units, apartments, and townhouses, leading to massive repair bills because of the relative complexity and access to strata building plumbing.

And anyone caught doing it faces the potential clean-up bill.

Over the last three months, there has been a major spike in blocked drains in apartment buildings in NSW as people turn to toilet paper alternatives, like wipes, which are causing drains to clog.

Newspapers, nappies, sanitary pads, disposable wipes, and household garbage are being flushed down toilets as thousands of people self-isolate.

And there is also a problem with garbage disposal. Social distancing is restricting lift use and strata managers are reporting they are seeing the first signs that large volumes of garbage are being left in stairwells and in other common areas by residents in many apartment blocks where lift access is restricted because of social distancing.

Blocked drains lead to raw sewage overflows which pose a public health problem and which in apartments and units are costly to fix because of access issues.

“We support the warning from Sydney Water that the continued use of disposable wipes could turn into a major public health issue, very quickly,” Strata Community Association NSW President, Chris Duggan, said today.

Strata Community Association (New South Wales)

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“Apartment buildings are designed differently to residential standalone homes and getting access to drains and sewerage lines is problematic in many apartments.

“If toilet plumbing lines get clogged with newspapers, disposable wipes, and nappies, it is a difficult and expensive issue to fix.

“If more and more people are confined to self-isolation, the prospect of clogged plumbing increases and the problem of raw sewage spills also increases.

“And because it is hard to find those responsible, the costs have to be shared by all owners.”

Mr Duggan said plumbing and sewage systems were already under pressure from so called “fatbergs” wherein cooking and other fats become bound to household wipes, nappies and other items flushed down toilets, drains and sinks.

“We are calling on all residents of apartments, townhouses, units and other strata title properties in New South Wales to be more vigilant in what they flush down toilets and to be patient in how they dispose of general household garbage.

“We support the warnings from Sydney Water that strata residents should refrain from flushing disposable wipes; they should be binned instead.

“Lives are already at risk because of COVID-19 and unnecessary and avoidable raw sewage and garbage overflows will only add to the problem.”

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About Strata Community Association (NSW)

Strata Community Association (NSW) is the peak industry body for Strata and Community Title Management in New South Wales. Membership includes strata managers, support staff, committee members and suppliers of products and services to the industry. SCA (NSW) has in excess of 3,000 members who help oversee, advise or manage a combined property portfolio with an estimated replacement value of over \$400 Billion. SCA (NSW) proudly fulfils the dual roles of a professional institute and consumer advocate.

Website: <https://nsw.strata.community/>

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