

## Grinder Pump- Frequently Asked Questions

### 1.-What is a grinder pump?

A grinder pump is a pumping unit consisting of a pump and small pipe from the unit to the sewer system. Installed outside of your home, grinder pumps are used to discharge wastewater from your home to the sewer system in the street or right-of-way.

### 2.-When is a grinder pump installed instead of a traditional sewer lateral?

A grinder pump is needed when conventional gravity sewers and/or laterals cannot be used to service an area or property, often due to the topography of the area. Typically, they are needed when a home is lower than the street and/or further away from the sewers. They are also required when a low pressure sewer system is constructed instead of a gravity sewer system.

### 3.-Why does my property need a grinder pump when my neighbor's property can be served by gravity sewers?

Your home may either sit lower than your neighbor's, or further away from the gravity sewer in the street and could not be served by a gravity sewer/lateral. Each home is evaluated on an individual basis.

### 4.-Who is responsible for the grinder pump?

Most grinder pumps are installed on private property and therefore are the responsibility of the property owner. The same is true for the private sewer service line on the home or business owner's property. Augusta Utilities' responsibility for sewer service begins after the property line in the public right-of-way. Therefore the resident is responsible for the cost of the electricity needed to operate the grinder pump which will be included in your electricity bill.

### 5.-How much does it cost to operate a grinder pump?

With the SSCP, the plumber will install the grinder pump and connect electricity to the device. The cost for electricity to operate the grinder pump is similar to that of a 40-watt light bulb, which is about \$15 to \$20 per year.

### 6.-What can I do to protect my grinder pump?

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 / disposing. Also, never pour the following items down drains or flush down toilets:

- Grease (a byproduct of cooking that comes from meat fats, oils, shortening, butter, margarine, food scraps, sauces and dairy products);
- Explosive or flammable material;
- Kitty Litter;
- Aquarium gravel;
- Strong Chemicals or toxic, caustic or poisonous substances;
- Degreasing solvents;
- Diapers, feminine products, or cloth of any kind;
- Fuel or lubricating oil, paint thinner or antifreeze;
- Plastic objects; and
- Seafood Shells

**\*\*\*These items can damage the grinder pump and its controls, cause blockages and backups and may create unsafe conditions in your lines and tank.**

7.-Does a grinder pump need regular maintenance or need to be pumped out, like my septic system?

Septic systems need to be pumped because they are tanks and need to periodically have the contents removed.

Grinder pumps do not need to be pumped out because they pump out the wastewater once the contents reach a certain level. Grinder pumps average eight years between service calls, so minimal regular maintenance is required when operated under normal conditions.

**\*\*\*In addition to following the tips provided in question #6, please follow the manufacturer's recommended maintenance guidelines.**

8.-What happens during a power failure?

If the power goes out, the grinder pump will not work. However, the pump unit does have storage capacity. During power outages, the two largest producers of wastewater (dishwater and washing machine) are not in use; therefore, your water usage decreases. Because the length of the power outage cannot be planned, you should conserve water to the best of your ability.

**\*\*\* Remember that your grinder pump is powered by electricity. In the event of a power outage, your pump will not work unless it is powered by a generator.**

9.-What should I do with my pump when I go on vacation?

If you plan on being away for several days, replace the wastewater in the tank with clean water to help minimize odors.

To do this,

- Run an inside faucet for about 10 minutes - long enough for the grinder pump to start working (you may need to go outside near the pump and listen to verify it has started).
- 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 keep it filled with a minimum amount of clean water. Remember to always leave the power to the pump on.

10.-Grinder Pump Illustrations-

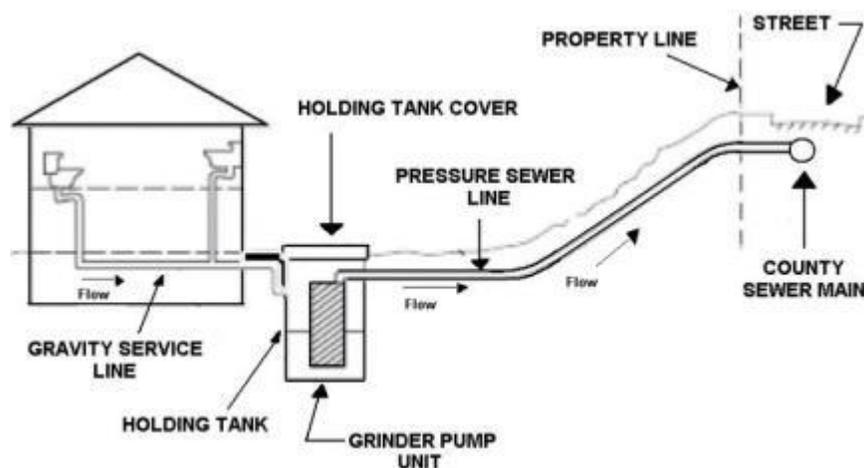




Photo above-Grinder pump station with fiberglass tank and stainless steel lid installed outside a home



Photo above-Grinder pump station with HDPE tank being installed