Tackling Wipes: Spreading the Word Through Advocacy and Outreach

About CASA’s Wipes Advocacy

For more than a decade, CASA has worked to promote clear and consistent labeling of wet wipe products. In 2019, CASA sponsored AB 1672, a bill that prescribes labeling requirements for both flushable and non-flushable wipes. The bill was passed by two policy committees in the Assembly before it was held over as a “two-year” bill. In January 2020, we reached an agreement with the nonwoven fabrics industry to craft amendments to the bill reflecting a compromise agreement that will be supported by both sides. CASA will be pushing for passage of the revised bill in the 2020 legislative session. Concurrently, CASA has been involved in other advocacy efforts on wipes, including field research on dispersibility of flushable wipes in live sewers, engaging with the national and international clean water community to coordinate our respective efforts, and working with Congress on classifying wipes as single-use plastics in a forthcoming legislative package.

CASA member agencies can support these efforts by engaging with their elected officials and reaching out to their customers on the issue of wet wipes pollution. We will alert members when to send letters of support to help secure passage of the bill during key committee hearings and other legislative milestones. Additionally, CASA is working with member agencies on a parallel communications campaign focused on wipes. Interested agencies can participate in the coordinated communications and public outreach effort on wipes awareness by getting involved with our communications committee and listserv.

CASA resources available at casaweb.org/wipes:

- Links to media coverage of wipes problems
- Downloadable & customizable graphics
- Information about AB 1672
- Wipes fact sheet
- Communications Tools
- Links to other wipes campaigns
- Template support letter on AB 1672

Coming soon:

- Wipes Tool Kit
- NACWA Cost of Wipes Study
- CASA Flushable Wipes Dispersibility Report
9 ways your agency can educate customers on the dark side of wipes

1. Run a week- or month-long social media education campaign on wipes and their impact on your customers, agency, and operations. Tag and share content with partner agencies using #WipesClogPipes.

2. At external customer events or in your lobby, consider an easy display of two lidded jars of water, one with toilet paper and one with a wipe included. Customers can shake these vigorously and see that wipes do not break down. Make sure to include the paper roll and wipes packaging in the display to help customers make the connection.

3. Share stories in your customer newsletter showing how wipes have impacted your agency, from necessitating expensive infrastructure to grind and screen out wipes, to increased labor costs to clean pipes and manage overflows/stoppages.

4. Add CASA’s “Wipes Clog Pipes” logo to your emails as part of your signature.

5. Make a 15-second demonstration video or use photos (operators are great photographers) showing how wipes do not disperse. Share on your website and social media channels.

6. Consider using your agency’s electronic cleaning, maintenance, and overflow records to create a map showing all the instances where wipes have caused stoppages or other problems in your system (see reverse for example).

7. Invite your local media to come watch/film wipes-related maintenance.

8. Consider highlighting three key messages in all your communications on wipes:
   - **Wipes are expensive to deal with**, either through infrastructure investments to manage them, or increased labor for routine cleaning.
   - **Wipes are plastic!** Independent laboratory testing proves that the majority of wipes brands in the US are made of synthetic materials. How many of your customers would be shocked to know they are rubbing plastic all over themselves?
   - **Wipes create worker safety issues.** Wipes can ball up together, creating giant rags that require employee effort to remove from pumps, pipes, and treatment plants. Often these wipes rags include syringes, sharp objects, and raw sewage, exposing employees to health hazards during removal.

9. Utilize the CASA Communications Tools at casaweb.org/wipes—including videos, logos, and other visuals—for easy ways to spice up your outreach.

“I find your lack of flushability disturbing.”

“These are not the wipes you’re looking for.”