

A solid green horizontal bar.

WHAT CAUSES BLOCKAGES



Wherever there are pipes and flowing water there are blockages, be it under a kitchen sink or on a leafy residential street.

Blockages, it seems, are a fact of life.

However, what causes them is a major factor because without that knowledge you can't possibly take any meaningful steps to resolve the issue without blindly burning budget in the hope it fixes the problem.

For example, one of the biggest causes of drain blockage in London is due to cooking fat being flushed down drains, either through dishwashers or poured down sinks.

These *fatbergs* as they're affectionately known coalesce with the other chemicals in the sewers and become solid blocks that cause major problems for the residents and businesses of the city.

In 2014 a 15 tonne lump of fat was removed from the sewers of Kingston. It poses a real problem to both the sewer network but to public safety as well.

The situation isn't entirely different in a hospital or care home setting. Whilst we've talked about the impact of blockages on patients, employees and the facility itself previously, we've never looked at the causes:

1. User Error

There's a popular saying in IT departments 'problem exists between chair and keyboard'. Whilst we may not like to admit it, sometimes blockages occur because we either overload the bedpan washer or pulp macerator or the wrong items – such as gloves and aprons – are placed in there as well.

Whilst these machines are designed to operate non-stop, there comes a point when simple physics comes into play and they are unable to break the waste enough to allow a smooth transition into the soil pipe.

Preventing it is simple enough – train (or retrain) operators in the correct way to stack a bedpan washer or feed a pulp macerator.

It's also vitally important that the wash or maceration cycle isn't interrupted. An incomplete cycle could result in build-up resulting in blockage and overflow next time the machine is used.

Not to mention the fact that any bedpans won't be properly sanitised.

2. Drainage Issues

This can be caused by a number of things including user error. However, assuming the machine has been used correctly, a number of factors can cause the drain to clog.

Incorrect size of pipe can mean that the pipe can't handle the volume of water moving through it causing it to back up and flood the machine.

Ensuring that your machines are plumbed correctly is important. As is making sure your sluice room has been designed by an expert and a certified engineer has carried out pre-installation check to make sure there is adequate drainage.

Needless to say, any machinery you buy should be installed by a certified engineer too.



Another common issue is a soil pipe that's too dry. Needless to say soil pipes need to be well lubricated to allow for infectious material and pulp to flow easily down its length to the sewer.

Our priming technology means that there is a steady trickle of water flowing through the pipe ahead of any drainage cycle to ensure material flows easily away to the sewers.

3. Technical Issues

Without proper maintenance, all machines breakdown and occasionally a part will fail. It's rare but it happens and no amount of servicing could have prevented it.

However, without question, maintaining your machines keeps these instances to an absolute minimum. Equally having planned preventative maintenance solutions in place also means you'll get your machinery back up and running in no time at all.

That means minimum disruption to your clinicians and minimum risk to the patients.

Occasionally however it's the technology itself that is at fault. If a machine has been poorly designed then no amount of maintenance is going to stop it from flooding and causing blockages.

This is frustrating and to some a little unhelpful, but it's true. A macerator designed like a washing machine will never do the job it's been tasked with.

It's as true for the disposal of infectious materials as it is for any other industry in the world: the right tool for the right job.

We pride ourselves on our technology because we looked at these problems and challenged ourselves to do better. Our Ultima pulp macerators use 9 blades to slice material into pieces only a few millimetres in size.

Coupled with finely tuned nozzles that spray water over the pulp, this means the soil pipe is never overtaxed and therefore never runs the risk of blocking.

Our technology is artisan, not indiscriminate and we take great pride in that.

For more information on our technology visit our products and services page. Alternatively, if you'd like to discuss your infection control requirements with a member of our team, contact us today.

Contact Details: -

Tel: +44 1202 731555

E-mail: info@ddcdolphin.com

Website: www.ddcdolphin.com



DDC Dolphin Ltd, The Fulcrum, Vantage Way, Poole, Dorset, BH12 4NU, United Kingdom.