



Q&A: FLUSHABLE PRODUCTS

What is a flushable product?

A flushable product is a product considered suitable for disposal through wastewater networks and treatment systems, including onsite treatment systems. It is flushable if it does not materially adversely impact those systems or remain recognisable in effluent leaving them after being through the wastewater treatment process.

What is the Flushable Products Standard (AS/NZS 5328:2022)?

The Australian and New Zealand Flushable Products Standard is a voluntary standard that sets out a framework, test methods and criteria for determining if products are suitable for flushing down a toilet. It also provides guidance and requirements for the labelling of products that are likely to be flushed down the toilet. It excludes toilet paper, liquids and soluble products.

What does it mean that a product “complies with” or “meets” the Standard?

If a product meets/complies with the Standard it has passed all of the steps described on pages 2 and 3 of this document and is therefore suitable for flushing.

The product packaging should display the “flushable” symbol (see below).

Packaging for non-flushable products that have a potential to be flushed, should clearly indicate that the product should NOT be disposed of down the toilet. The packaging should display either the tidy person symbol (a symbol of a person disposing an item in the bin, example right) or a do not flush symbol with a cross line (example right).



What does the packaging symbol look like?

The symbols below are being trademarked by WSAA. They are intended to be used as the primary indicator that a product has passed the flushability tests outlined in the AS/NZ Standard. However there are other similar logos that will appear on packaging and indicate that the product complies with the Standard. Any logo should include that it complies with AS/NZS 5328.

Manufacturers are able to use these logos if they can demonstrate that a product meets the requirements of the Standard. If you are a manufacturer and want a copy of the Standard please visit the Standards Australia website here: <https://store.standards.org.au/product/as-nzs-5328-2022> If you have a question about the process please email WSAA at info@wsaa.asn.au



Note that in the AS/NZ Standard there are examples of symbols that could be used on product packaging to indicate the product has passed the criteria in the Standard and is safe for flushing. These are, however, only examples and are copyrighted by Standards Australia and New Zealand.

The Standard specifies that the symbol should be prominently visible on the on-shelf package and not obscured by packaging seals or folds.

The Standard states that packaging for products that have a high potential to be flushed should clearly inform customers whether or not they are appropriate for disposal via the toilet. For example, if the product cannot be flushed but is considered as having a potential to be flushed then it should clearly display either a tidy person or do not flush symbol.

Are there already products on the shelf that meet the Standard?

There are already a couple of products on shelves and online at major supermarkets that indicate they comply with the Standard and we expect more products to become available in the coming months. Always check the package and if in doubt dispose of the product in the bin.

What about products that say they are flushable and/or include a flushable logo but don't mention the Standard?

WSAA will follow up on any products that it becomes aware of making a flushable claim without referring to the Standard by making the manufacturer aware of the need to be compliant with the Standard. For both Australia and New Zealand, AS/NZS 5328:2022 sets the benchmark for products that can be flushed. Manufacturers with products that have met the standard by passing its test requirements should refer to this standard when claiming their product is flushable. Under either the Australian Consumer Law (ACL) or NZ Fair Trading Act (FTA), manufacturers can be required to produce evidence that their claim of meeting AS/NZS 5328:2022 is valid. Making false or misleading claims under either the ACL or FTA is an offence. Products that claim to be flushable but do not meet AS/NZS 5328:2022 should not be flushed. If you are concerned a product is claiming to be flushable but may not meet AS/NZS 5328:2022, contact the manufacturer or the ACCC/NZ Commerce Commission.

So what can I flush?

Only flush the 4Ps: POO, PEE, toilet PAPER and products with PROOF that they have passed the Flushable Products Standard and include the flushable logo on their packaging.

What other products might pass the Standard?

In the coming years other products will be developed and seek to comply with the Standard. The Standard has contemplated the development of these items and requires the products to pass a series of tests which confirm that the product will be similar to toilet paper in the way it behaves in the wastewater system.

Are there other Standards like this around the world?

This Flushable Products Standard is one of the first of its kind in the world where there has been collaboration between water utilities and manufacturers in its development. There is already

interest in adopting the Australian and New Zealand Standard from other countries. Israel has advised they are planning to adopt the Standard with no changes. Other countries with a flushability standard include: Belgium, Spain and China. Noting that these three countries have based their standard primarily on a wipe manufacturer Code of Practice.

Who was involved in drafting the Standard?

The Standard has been many years in the making. Approximately 7 years ago WSAA initiated discussions between water utilities and peak bodies representing manufacturers of wipes products. Over the years these discussions evolved and it was agreed that the development of a Standard would provide a way forward in assisting all concerned parties, including customers.

The Standard was developed by a technical committee including manufacturers, water utilities, peak bodies and consumer groups. The members of the technical committee were:

- Accord Australasia Ltd
- Australian Food and Grocery Council
- Australian Local Government Association
- Australian Water Association
- Consumers Federation of Australia
- Standards New Zealand (SNZ)
- Engineers Australia
- EPA Victoria
- Independent Chairperson (Australia)
- New Zealand Food & Grocery Council
- New Zealand Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board
- Water Industry Operators Association
- Water New Zealand
- Water Services Association of Australia

Is the Standard voluntary?

The Standard is voluntary. However, for products to use a flushable symbol they must meet the requirements of the AS/NZS Standard. If they have not met the Standard requirements, they could be the subject to investigation by either the ACCC or NZ Commerce Commission and possible legal action. Manufacturers of products are strongly encouraged to comply with the Standard, including the labelling requirements. False or misleading claims that a product is flushable would constitute a breach of either the Australian Consumer Law or NZ Fair Trading Act.

What type of products might NOT pass the criteria in the Standard?

Those that are not compatible with household plumbing, the wastewater network or the downstream environment. This includes products containing plastic, products that don't disintegrate to a high level, or those that cannot pass easily through pipework or pumps. Essentially products that do not behave like traditional toilet paper in the wastewater system (noting that toilet paper is also changing, moving from 2 ply to 3-6 ply, and the recent introduction of plastic into some toilet papers).

What are the tests for products to comply with the Standard?

There are six tests and an attestation:

- 1) The product needs to clear a toilet and the drainline – indicative of plumbing on the customer property (1 test).

- 2) The product needs to not snag or block pumps, both household-level pumps and wastewater network pumps (2 tests).
- 3) The product needs to break apart readily as it moves through the wastewater pipework to an extent that shouldn't cause blockages or contribute to fatbergs. After 60 minutes under forces similar to those of a wastewater pipe, the majority of the product should be in pieces smaller than 2.45cm square (1 test).
- 4) The product should sink and not float as it moves through a treatment plant (1 test).
- 5) The product should degrade biologically so that it doesn't adversely affect treatment plant processes or leave a residue in the environment (1 test).
- 6) The manufacturer attests that the product does not contain any plastic. (Plastics are known to cause environmental harm, even in small pieces. Rather than test for their presence the Standard requires that the manufacturer attest that plastic is not present in the product.)



Further information and contacts

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Accord (hygiene, personal care and specialty products industry)

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Australian Food and Grocery Council (AFGC)

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