On an average day, you’ll likely use about 75 to 100 gallons of water. After you flush a toilet, brush your teeth, wash clothes, or take a shower, that “used” water leaves your house, but it doesn’t go away. King County works with your local sewer agency to take the sewage from your home or workplace, clean it, recycle it, and return it safely to the environment.

King County’s Industrial Waste Program regulates the wastewater discharged to our system by businesses and industries. These standards protect our system and the quality of our reclaimed water and biosolids.

Combined Sewer Overflows
Overflows of sewage and stormwater can sometimes occur in older areas of Seattle during heavy rains. Though these combined sewer overflows (CSOs) are 90 percent stormwater, they can impact water quality and pose public health risks. King County’s Protecting Our Waters Program will complete work started in 1979 to control these overflows.

That flush may be the end for you, but for us, it’s where we get started.

Regional Sewer Pipes & Pumps
Sewage travels through miles of pipelines before entering a treatment plant.

PROTECTING WATER QUALITY STARTS WITH YOU

Don’t trash the system. Putting trash, wipes, hygiene products and condoms in the toilet can clog pipes and damage pumping equipment.

Think "green" when you can. Choosing environmentally friendly, biodegradable household cleaning and personal care products minimizes the entry of harmful chemicals into the environment.

Disconnect. Too much water in the system can create overflows and pollute the environment – disconnect downspouts from the sewer system and redirect them to lawns and gardens.

Conserve. Conserving water reduces your monthly bill and prevents excess water from entering the system, so there’s less to treat.

Once at the treatment plant, water and the organic solids are separated. The water is treated through natural biological processes that use bacteria, oxygen and settling tanks. The end product meets stringent water quality standards prior to discharge.

Clean Effluent

Puget Sound

All organic solids removed from the water are treated in a separate biological process that creates nutrient-rich biosolids, which are used as a fertilizer and soil amendment. Waste gas from the digester process is captured and used to run equipment and/or scrubbed and turned into natural gas or electricity.