

## EDANA reasserts effectiveness of industry flushability standard GD4

### **Context**

The [Marine Conservation Society](#) has challenged industry guidelines on flushability (GD4) as “insufficient” and recommends consumers not to buy wipes produced to this standard and retailers to not stock them. MCS instead advocate the adoption of the ‘Water Industry Specification’ *WIS 4-02-06* to assess the flushability of wipes

### **Position statement**

EDANA unequivocally reasserts the effectiveness of industry flushability standard GD4 and strongly challenges MCS’ claim that it is “insufficient for UK sewers” and that the test methods are not robust enough. GD4 has a history of over 15 years of rigorous testing and constant review that comprehensively demonstrates the compatibility of flushable wipes with wastewater infrastructure. It has proven to be effective in both the test environment and by a [Water UK’s 2017 study](#) of sewer blockages.

- EDANA continues to promote GD4 as the proven industry standard for flushable wipes and strongly advocate the [industry guidelines for correct disposal labelling](#) of non-flushable wipes.
- EDANA considers it unnecessary, and possibly counterproductive, to promote a separate protocol which will confuse the market.
- GD4 test methods were devised by experts from industry, academia, consultancy and the wastewater industry. ‘Fine to Flush’ was devised without proper consideration from the manufacturers of the products in question.
- GD4 compliant flushable wipes do not contain plastic. This is a stipulation in the industry standard.
- The WIS lacks the solid scientific background of GD4, garnered over the years of extensive research and testing. Only one lab can perform the WIS tests and there is a lack of information about reproducibility and repeatability of the protocol.
- Focusing on replacing proven standards while there is proof that the real problem is caused by the 90% non-flushable wipes, is misleading. Increased awareness leading to the reduction of the improper disposal of wipes, fats, oils and grease and wipes will have the largest impact in reducing sewer blockages and marine litter.
- GD4 (including the labelling Code of Practice) is the basis for national legislation or standards in Belgium and Spain and is in the process of being adopted by Waste Water authorities in other European countries. GD4 acceptance within the wastewater and regulatory sectors in these countries provides important validation that these test methods, pass/fail criteria, and “Do Not Flush” labelling practices are fit for purpose



Wipes manufacturers firmly believe that close collaboration with other relevant parties, most notably the water bodies, is the optimum method to achieve products that meet consumer needs, agree on standards that mitigate their impact and align on communication initiatives that inform consumers and retailers alike.