EDANA position on Water UK’s flushability specification and ‘Fine to Flush’ initiative

12 February 2019

EDANA and wipes manufacturers were surprised and disappointed to learn of Water UK’s publication of the WIS and new ‘Fine to Flush’ initiative.

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 launch a separate protocol which will confuse the market. It’s not clear—particularly given the close collaboration on this issue in 2018—why Water UK decided to launch this protocol. One devised without proper consideration from the manufacturers of the products in question.
- This WIS is presented as a solution to fatbergs. Education leading to the reduction of the improper disposal of fats, oils, grease and wipes is the solution to fatbergs.
- GD4 compliant flushable wipes do not contain plastic. Water UK state that their standard will ‘finally assure plastic free flushable wipes, yet this is already 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 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.

EDANA considers it unnecessary, and possibly counterproductive, to launch a separate protocol which will confuse the market. It’s not clear—particularly given the close collaboration on this issue in 2018—why Water UK decided to launch this protocol. One devised without proper consideration from the manufacturers of the products in question.

- EDANA and wipes manufacturers were surprised and disappointed to learn of Water UK’s publication of the WIS and new ‘Fine to Flush’ initiative.

Next Steps

Consumer education to reduce and eliminate the flushing of products that shouldn’t be disposed via the toilet will have the largest impact for reducing sewer blockages. This approach is echoed in the very first recommendation of the Water UK study: “Public/press...