

Keeping sewer drainlines clear with low flush toilets or cisterns.**Field of the Invention**

The present invention relates to a device for improving drainline clearance.

The invention has been primarily developed for use in relation to toilets with cisterns that have an ultra low flushing volume, and will be described hereinafter with reference to this application. The expression "ultra low flushing volume" is herein defined as having nominal full and reduced flush volumes of about 2.5 litres and 2 litres respectively.

A cistern is known as a flush tank in the United States of America.

Background of the Invention

The design of water closets (WCs) in Australia has been greatly influenced by the need to minimise water consumption and maintain adequate sanitation systems to safeguard and maintain a high level of public health. Since 1982, reductions in Australian WC flushing volumes have led to a major lowering of the average daily WC water consumption per person from 55 litres to 16.5 litres.

A major contribution to this reduction was the development of the two button dual flush WC having 6/3 litre reduced flush technology which gave the user the choice of applying either a 6 litre full flush or a 3 litre reduced flush option to operate the WC. More recently, toilets which give the user the choice of applying either a 4.5 litre full flush or a 3 litre reduced flush option have been developed.

Known attempts known to operate toilets with flushing volumes approaching the ultra low flushing volumes referred to above have led to difficulty in transporting solids waste through sewer drainlines.

Further, known devices developed to address these drainline problems have been large, complicated and expensive, and often required installation under the floor on which the toilet is installed. Such installations are not possible due to budgetary and/or space limitations in many buildings.

Embodiments of the present invention provide a device for improving drainline clearance for use with an ultra low flushing volume toilet, and that can be installed adjacent the toilet.

Summary of the Invention

Accordingly, in a first aspect, the present invention provides a device for improving drainline clearance for use with an ultra low flushing volume toilet, the device including:

a centrifuge separator means for separating liquids and solids, the separator means having a substantially horizontal inlet, adapted for connection to the outlet of a toilet pan, an outlet primarily for solids and an outlet primarily for liquids; and

a reservoir, beneath the separator means, having an inlet in fluid communication with the liquids outlet of the separator means, the reservoir being adapted to syphonically empty substantially all of its contents into a sewerage drainline, after at least 2 flushes of the toilet,

wherein the separator means and the reservoir have a combined vertical dimension less than the maximum height of the toilet pan outlet for installation adjacent the cistern and substantially above the floor level of the toilet.

The reservoir is preferably adapted to syphonically empty substantially all of its contents into the sewerage drainline after approximately 2 to 4, most preferably 3, flushes of the toilet.

The liquids outlet of the separator means preferably also functions as the inlet of the reservoir.

The substantially horizontal separator means inlet preferably has a slight downward fall away from the toilet pan outlet, most preferably about a 5mm fall over its length.

The centrifuge device preferably has a substantially central lower opening through which the solids are directed, with the liquids being directed along the inner surface of the opening to the reservoir.

The separator means preferably has horizontal dimensions larger than its maximum vertical dimension. The reservoir preferably has horizontal dimensions larger than its maximum vertical dimension.

The liquids outlet of the separator means preferably includes a series of inwardly facing fins, most preferably spiraled fins.

The device preferably also includes a duct primarily for solids. The duct preferably has an inlet, most preferably with an outwardly flared upper end, beneath the solids outlet of the separator means. In one form, the duct has a substantially vertical outlet, most preferably a flanged outlet, adapted for connection to a floor mounted sewerage drainline connection. In another form, the duct preferably has a substantially horizontal outlet adapted for connection to a wall mounted sewerage drainline connection.

The reservoir preferably has an outlet connected to the inlet via a syphon pipe. The syphon pipe preferably has an outlet, beneath the reservoir, adapted to direct the contents of the reservoir into the sewerage drainline, most preferably via the duct. The syphon pipe outlet is preferably below the floor level of the toilet.

As used herein, the term "solids" includes human faecal waste and toilet paper.

Description of the Drawings

Preferred embodiments of the invention will now be described, by way of examples only, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

20

Fig. 1 is a cross sectional side view of a first embodiment of a device for improving drainline clearance, installed adjacent a toilet, prior to flushing of the toilet;

Figs. 2 to 9 are cross sectional side views of the device and toilet shown in Fig. 1 showing sequential steps in the operation of the device and toilet;

Fig. 10 is a cross sectional side view of a second embodiment of a device for improving drainline clearance, installed adjacent a cistern, prior to flushing of the toilet; and

Figs. 11 to 15 are cross sectional side views of the device and toilet shown in Fig. 10 showing sequential steps in the operation of the device and toilet.

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

Fig. 1 shows a first embodiment of a device 20 for improving clearance of a drainline 22. The drainline 22 comprises an initial vertical part or riser 22a followed by a slightly downwardly

- 4 -

angled part 22b. The device 20 is shown installed adjacent a toilet, of which only a toilet pan 24 is shown, installed on floor F. The toilet's cistern is omitted to improve drawing clarity. The toilet pan 24 includes an outlet 26 and a water seal or water trap 28.

- 5 The device 20 includes a centrifuge separator means 30 for separating liquid and solid waste. The separator means 30 has a substantially horizontal (tangential) inlet 32 which is connected, at seal 34, to the outlet 26 of the toilet pan 24. The inlet 32 has a slight downward fall away from the outlet 26 of about 5mm over its length. The separator means 30 also has an outlet 36 primarily for solids and an outlet 38 primarily for liquids. The solids outlet 36 is in the form of the central lower opening in the lowermost surface of the separator means 30. The liquids outlet 38 is in the form of the inwardly facing curved surface surrounding the solids outlet/opening 36. It should be appreciated that the separator means 30 may not always completely separate solid and liquid wastes. A small percentage of the liquid waste may also travel with the solid waste (e.g. with toilet paper) through the solids outlet, hence the prior characterisation of the solids outlet as an outlet "primarily" for solids and the liquids outlet as an outlet "primarily" for liquids. The operation of the two outlets 36, 38 shall be described in more detail below. Further, the liquids outlet (surface) 38 includes a number of inwardly directed, spiraled fins 40 whose function shall also be described in more detail below.
- 15
- 20 The device 20 also includes a reservoir 42 in fluid communication with the liquids outlet 38 and a duct 44 beneath the solids outlet 36. The liquids outlet surface 38 also functions as an inlet to the reservoir 42. The duct 44 has an outwardly flared upper end 46, whose function shall be described in more detail below.
- 25
- 30 The reservoir 42 has a wider lower part 42a and a narrower upper part 42b. The reservoir 42 also has an outlet 48 in fluid communication with a syphon pipe 50 having a weir height 52. The weir height 52 is at the same height as the boundary between the wider and narrower parts 42a and 42b of the reservoir 42, the purpose of which will be described in more detail below. The syphon pipe 50 has a lower outlet pipe 54 which extends into the vertical part 22a of the drainline 22. The upper end of the outlet pipe 54 passes through the lower end of the duct 44 to join the lower end of the syphon pipe 50.

The duct 44 includes a locating flange 60 and a seal 62 at its lower end to seal it with respect to the upper end of the drainline vertical part 22a at or near the level of the floor F.

The separator means 30 is generally cylindrical in shape and is about 120mm high and 200mm in diameter. The reservoir 42 is generally rectangular in shape, albeit stepped, and is about 100mm high and about 300mm by 280mm and 190mm by 210mm at parts 42a and 42b respectively. The separator means 30 and the reservoir 42 are thus both about two to three times wider than they are high. This width to height ratio, the horizontal inlet 32 of the separator means 30, and the positioning of the reservoir 42 directly under the separator means 30, results in the device 20 being compact. This compactness advantageously allows the device 20 to be installed on the floor level F on which the toilet pan 24 is installed. Further, the combined vertical dimension (i.e. installed height) of the separator means 30 and the reservoir 42 of the device 20 does not extend above the maximum height of the upper most part of the pan outlet 26. In new installations, this allows the device 20 to be simply and easily installed behind the toilet pan 24 and thus concealed from view. The device 20 is also suitable for retrofitted installations as it can be easily connected to an existing S trap style drainline without costly modifications to the floor or foundations or the like.

15

The operation of the device 20 will now be described. Fig. 1 shows the device 20 prior to operation of the toilet (or following operation of the device 20).

Fig. 2 shows the device 20 and toilet pan 24 after the pan has received solid waste S and/or liquid waste L.

20

Fig. 3 shows the device 20 and toilet pan 24 after flushing of the cistern which causes the liquid in the pan seal 28 and the wastes S and L to flow through the inlet 32 of the separator means 30. During this process the heavier solids waste S fall through the solids outlet 36 and travel through the duct 42 and into the drainline 22, as shown in Fig. 4. However, the centrifugal or swirling action of the accompanying water and liquid waste causes the majority of the water and liquid waste L to adhere to the outside of the separator means liquid outlet surface 38 and follow the surface 38 into the reservoir 42. The spiraled fins 40 prevent paper waste from adhering to the surface 38, whilst not interrupting the swirling liquid flow caused by the centrifuge action of the separator means 30. The outwardly flared upper end 46 of the duct 44 prevents solids waste, especially toilet paper, from getting caught on the end 46 of the duct 44.

30

Fig. 4 shows the device 20 and toilet pan 24 after the flushing cycle is complete with the reservoir 42 now partially fulfilled by the flushing liquid and the solids waste S in the drainline 22.

35

Fig. 5 shows the device 20 and toilet pan 24 during a second flushing and separation cycle.

Fig. 6 shows the device 20 and toilet pan 24 at the end of the second flushing cycle with the volume in the reservoir 42, and the solids waste S in the drainline 22, increased by the flushing liquid.

Fig. 7 shows the device 20 and toilet pan 24 during a third flushing cycle.

Fig. 8 shows the device 20 and the toilet pan 24 towards the end of the third flushing cycle which results in the reservoir 42 being filled above the weir height 52 of the syphon pipe 50. The syphon pipe 50 then overflows and initiates syphonic emptying of the contents of the reservoir 42 through the pipe 54 and into the drainline 22. The upper narrowed part 42a of the reservoir 42 causes an acceleration in the height increase of the rising liquid to ensure a strong positive overflow of liquid initiates the syphoning action. The extension of the syphon outlet pipe 54 below the floor level F and into the vertical part 22a of the drainline 22 further improves the syphonic action as it increases the head height between the weir height 52 and the lower end of the outlet pipe 54. The increased head height ensures a fast and powerful emptying of the contents of the reservoir 42. A venturi can also be added to the pipe 54 to further improve the syphonic action.

As shown in Fig. 9, the emptying of the contents of the reservoir through the syphon pipe 50 and the outlet pipe 54 provides a relatively large single volume of water, compared to that available with a single flush of the toilet, for improved transport and thus clearance of the solid waste S in the drainline 22. In the embodiment shown, the reservoir 42 provides an effective flush volume of about 7 litres, which is about triple the (approximately 2.5 litre) full flush volume of the toilet.

Figs. 10 to 15 show a second embodiment of a device 80 for improving drainline clearance. Like features of the device 80 to those described with reference to the device 20 have been indicated with like reference numerals. The device 80 operates substantially in accordance with that previously described except it has been configured for "P trap" style installations for connection to a horizontally extending drainline 22c.

Although the invention has been described with reference to preferred embodiments, it would be appreciated by those skilled in the art that the invention may be embodied in many other forms.

Claims:

1. A device for improving drainline clearance for use with an ultra low flushing volume toilet, the device including:
 - 5 a centrifuge separator means for separating liquids and solids, the separator means having a substantially horizontal inlet, adapted for connection to the outlet of a toilet pan, an outlet primarily for solids and an outlet primarily for liquids; and
 - a reservoir, beneath the separator means, having an inlet in fluid communication with the liquids outlet of the separator means, the reservoir being adapted to syphonically
 - 10 empty substantially all of its contents into a sewerage drainline, after at least 2 flushes of the toilet,wherein the separator means and the reservoir have a combined vertical dimension less than the maximum height of the toilet pan outlet for installation adjacent the cistern and substantially above the floor level of the toilet.
- 15 2. The device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the reservoir is adapted to syphonically empty substantially all of its contents into the sewerage drainline after approximately 2 to 4 flushes of the toilet.
- 20 3. The device as claimed in claim 2, wherein the reservoir is adapted to syphonically empty substantially all of its contents into the sewerage drainline after approximately 3 flushes of the toilet.
- 25 4. The device as claimed in claim 1, 2 or 3, wherein the liquids outlet of the separator means also functions as the inlet of the reservoir.
5. The device as claimed in any one of the preceeding claims, wherein the substantially horizontal separator means inlet has a slight downward fall away from the toilet pan outlet.
- 30 6. The device as claimed in claim 5, wherein the substantially horizontal separator means inlet has about a 5mm downward fall away from the toilet pan outlet over its length.

7. The device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the centrifuge device has a substantially central lower opening through which the solids are directed, with the liquids being directed along the inner surface of the opening to the reservoir.

5 8. The device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the separator means has horizontal dimensions larger than its maximum vertical dimension.

9. The device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the reservoir has horizontal dimensions larger than its maximum vertical dimension.

10

10. The device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the liquids outlet of the separator means includes a series of inwardly facing fins.

11. The device as claimed in claim 10, wherein the inwardly facing fins are spiraled
15 fins.

12. The device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the device also includes a duct primarily for solids.

13. The device as claimed in claim 12, wherein the duct has an inlet, beneath the
20 solids outlet of the separator means.

14. The device as claimed in claim 13, wherein the duct inlet has an outwardly flared
upper end.

25

15. The device as claimed in claim 12, 13 or 14, wherein the duct has a substantially vertical outlet, adapted for connection to a floor mounted sewerage drainline connection.

16. The device as claimed in claim 15, wherein the substantially vertical duct outlet,
30 is a flanged outlet.

17. The device as claimed in claim 12, 13 or 14, wherein the duct has a substantially horizontal outlet, adapted for connection to a wall mounted sewerage drainline connection.

35

18. The device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the reservoir has an outlet connected to the inlet via a syphon pipe.

19. The device as claimed in claim 18, wherein the syphon pipe has an outlet,
5 beneath the reservoir, adapted to direct the contents of the reservoir into the sewerage drainline.

20. The device as claimed in claim 19, wherein the syphon pipe outlet directs the contents of the reservoir into the sewerage drainline via the duct.

10

21. The device as claimed in claim 19 or 20, wherein the syphon pipe outlet is below the floor level of the toilet.

22. A device for improving drainline clearance for use with an ultra low flushing
15 volume toilet, the device substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to Figs. 1 to 9 or Figs. 10 to 15 of the accompanying drawings.