

# Plumbers & Sewer Contractors: Your Actions Can Prevent Sanitary Sewer Overflows!



## **What Are Sanitary Sewer Overflows or SSOs?**

SSOs discharge untreated or partially treated human and industrial waste, debris, and disease-causing organisms from the sanitary sewer onto the ground near and into homes and potentially into creeks, rivers, lakes or streams.

## **What Are the Impacts of SSOs?**

SSOs may result in property damage, environmental damage and/or potential liability to you or your company. Allowing sewage to discharge to a gutter, storm drain or waterway may subject you to penalties and/or out-of-pocket costs to reimburse cities or public agencies for clean-up efforts and regulatory penalties.

## **How Can You Prevent SSOs? and avoid associated penalties & fines**

### **When clearing plugged sewer laterals:**

- Whenever possible, remove root balls, grease blockages and any other debris; don't push debris from the lateral to the sewer main.
- If you can't prevent a root ball or other debris from entering the sewer main when working in our service area, **please call us** at (650) 363-4100, so we can work with you (free of charge) to remove the root ball from the sewer main to prevent blockages further downstream.
- Use plenty of water to flush lines.
- Take all appropriate action and be cautious when opening manholes. Hazardous sewer gases from manholes are odorless, undetectable and can be deadly. Please note that discharge into a publicly owned manhole requires a permit. Please contact us at (650) 363-4100, for an application.

### **When constructing sewer laterals:**

- Contact us at (650) 363-4100 for permits and appropriate construction details and specifications.
- Check your work area. Gravel, backfill material and test plugs can become lodged in the sewer line and cause blockages. Make sure no debris is left in the sewer line before you backfill.
- Avoid offset joints – offset joints make sewer lines vulnerable to root intrusion & grease accumulation, cause debris hang-ups and make lines harder to clean. Properly bed your joints and don't hammer tap.

## **Who Do I Call to Avoid an SSO?**

**Help us help you...**

If you require our free assistance to help clear root balls, grease blockages and other debris from a main sewer line to prevent an SSO, please call us at:

**(650) 363-4100**

### **County Maintained Districts**

Burlingame Hills Sewer Maintenance District  
Crystal Springs County Sanitation District  
Devonshire County Sanitation District  
Edgewood Sewer Maintenance District  
Emerald Lake Heights Sewer Maintenance District  
Fair Oaks Sewer Maintenance District  
Harbor Industrial Sewer Maintenance District  
Kensington Square Sewer Maintenance District  
Oak Knoll Sewer Maintenance District  
Scenic Heights County Sanitation District

*(District service area map can be viewed by  
accessing the County website at:  
[www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/sewers](http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/sewers))*

### **Office Location:**

County of San Mateo  
Department of Public Works  
555 County Center, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Redwood City, CA 94063  
Tel: (650) 363-4100  
Fax: (650) 361-8220



**Bay Area Clean Water Agencies**  
*A Joint Powers Public Agency*

