

Spring 2012

THE CENTRAL CONTRA COSTA SANITARY DISTRICT

Volume 16,
Number 1

PIPELINE

A newsletter about protecting public health and the environment

SPRING CLEANING



**Green Tips
Inside**



Join Us On Earth Day

April 22, 2012 is the 42nd Anniversary of Earth Day. There will be a variety of community events throughout Contra Costa County (and around the world) that weekend. Many people will be participating in Earth Day events to demonstrate their commitment to protecting the environment—a commitment shared by the Central Contra Costa Sanitary District.

We will have a booth at the Earth Day Festival being held at the John Muir National Historic Site, 4202 Alhambra Ave., Martinez on Saturday, April 21. Our friendly staff will offer tips and free materials about preventing water pollution and safely disposing of household hazardous wastes.

Please join us in celebrating Earth Day!

Don't Flush Your Wipes!

If you use disposable wipes while doing your spring cleaning, please don't flush them down the toilet – even if they are labeled as “flushable.”

That label simply means they will go down your toilet when flushed. What you should be concerned about is what can happen after such products are flushed.

Unlike toilet paper, these items do not quickly disintegrate in water. They stay largely intact as they travel through the sewer pipes and can get caught on roots or other debris, increasing the risk of clogs.

As these products have grown in popularity, our crews have been spending time and resources to remove mounds of disposable wipes that clog our public sewer lines, pumps, and equipment. **These items are an even greater threat to your home's sewer line, which is much smaller and more easily clogged.**

Please throw away cleaning/disinfecting wipes, moist towelettes, personal hygiene products, etc., in the trash, never in your toilet.

Only human waste and toilet paper should be flushed down your toilet.



District Wins Awards

Central Contra Costa Sanitary District's people and programs are among the best in the industry. This fact was acknowledged recently when the District won two California Water Environment Association (San Francisco Bay Section) awards:

- **Safe Treatment Plant of the Year**
- **Mechanical Person of the Year** (Mechanical Supervisor Lee Sutherland)

These regional award winners will now compete at the State level. Stay tuned; we'll let you know if we win.



Five Steps to A Healthy Garden

Now that spring has sprung, it's time to get busy in your garden. Here are five things you can do right now to have a healthy and beautiful garden.

1. Don't use pesticides unless absolutely necessary.

By "necessary" we mean you've identified the pest, the pest is causing a real problem (not just an annoyance), and you've already tried managing it without pesticides. Remember, insects such as bees and ladybugs provide valuable services, and are more readily harmed by pesticides than the pest insects we are trying to manage.

2. Realize there are beneficial insects.

Only a few of the thousands of species of insects in your garden actually do any damage. Most insects are helpful creatures that naturally keep pests in check or pollinate plants. If you use a broad-spectrum pesticide, you'll be killing more helpful insects than pests.

3. Grow plants that attract beneficial insects.

Plants that will bring lots of helpful creatures to your garden to help you control pests are widely available at Bay Area nurseries. Examples include Sunflowers, Rosemary, Lavender, Cosmos, and Salvia plants.

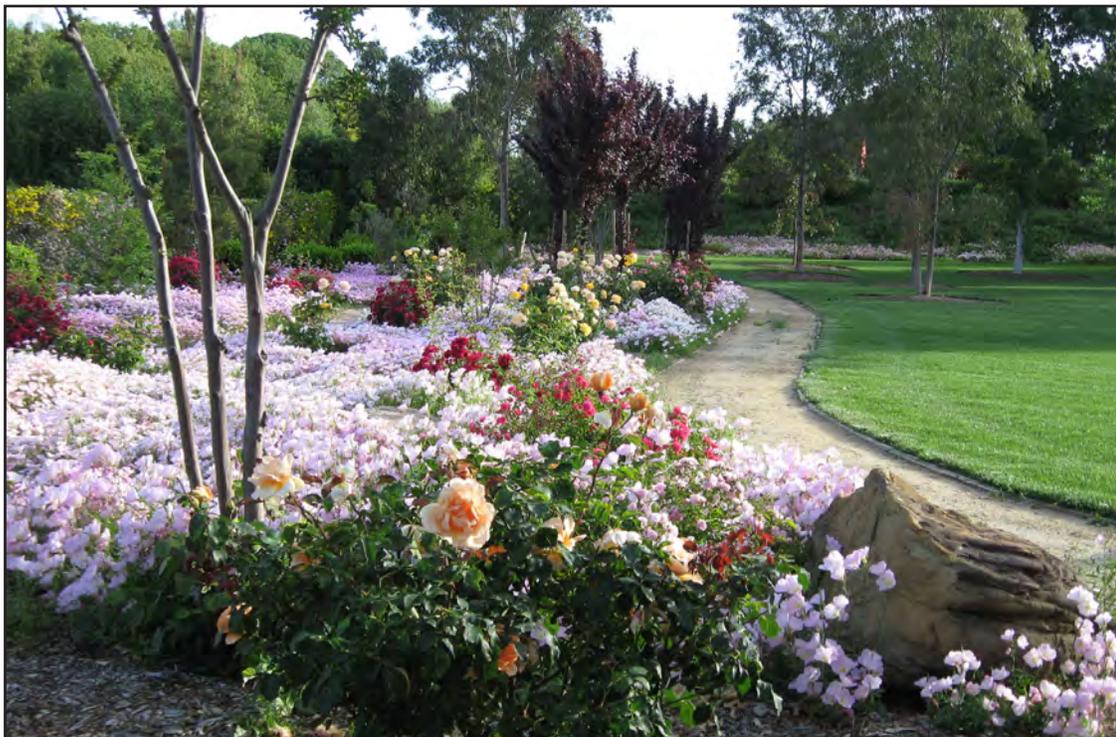
4. Use balanced fertilizers instead of high-nitrogen fertilizers.

Compost, organic fertilizers, and encapsulated fertilizers release nutrients slowly and support the balanced, healthy growth of plants. High-nitrogen fertilizers, on the other hand, stimulate lots of tender new growth which attracts aphids and other pests.

5. Use mulch.

Mulch evens out soil temperatures, encourages good soil texture and root development, suppresses weeds, decomposes over time to provide nutrients, and conserves water by slowing evaporation. Leave some areas of bare soil so ground-nesting bees can find a place to live.

Additional information about healthy gardening is available on our website. Go to www.centralsan.org and click on the "Healthy Garden Guide" in the lower left of the home page.



Students of the Gardening Program of Mt. Diablo Adult Education, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Contra Costa Master Gardeners, Diablo Valley College's adaptive horticulture class, and other volunteers teamed up with the City of Pleasant Hill and the Central Contra Costa Sanitary District to create the **Pleasant Hill Instructional Garden** (located at the Pleasant Hill Education Center on Santa Barbara Road). It is a model for healthy gardening practices (no pesticides), sustainable landscaping, water conservation and habitat preservation, and a certified Wildlife Habitat by the National Wildlife Federation. Recycled water provided by CCCSD is used to irrigate the garden.

Infrastructure Improvements

Central Contra Costa Sanitary District regularly maintains, repairs or replaces sewer lines and other elements of our 1,500-mile wastewater collection system to ensure continuous, trouble-free service for our 455,400 customers. We do our best to minimize the inconveniences our projects cause and appreciate your understanding.

Here's a brief summary of major projects:

Walnut Creek

The Walnut Creek Sewer Renovation Project, Phase 9, is replacing sewers in the Rudgear Road, Hawthorne Drive and Mountain View Blvd. areas. Expected completion: January 2013.

Lafayette

The Lafayette Sewer Renovation Project, Phase 8, is renovating sewers in the Upper Happy Valley Road area from Cowan Road to Las Arabis. Expected completion: December 2012.

Orinda

The North Orinda Sewer Renovations Project, Phase 4, is renovating sewers in the El Toyonal and Claremont Avenue areas of North Orinda. Expected completion: January 2013.

Martinez and Walnut Creek

The South Main/I-680/Martinez Trunk Line Project is renovating sewers in South Main Street between Hill Road and Lilac Drive in Walnut Creek; in Lancaster Road between Westwood Court and Orchard Lane; on the Shell Refinery Property and east along Marina Vista to Highway I-680 in Martinez. Expected completion: September 2012.

For more information about these or other construction projects, please contact Community Affairs Representative Chris Carpenter at (925) 229-7200 or ccarp@centralsan.org.

More info:

Detailed maps for our projects are sent to affected residents and posted on our website, www.centralsan.org (check the links in the "Construction Zone" box in the lower right corner of the home page).



Protect Water Quality DO NOT Flush Your Drugs!

Bring unwanted medications to one of these collection sites for safe disposal:

- **City of Clayton Police Dept.**
6000 Heritage Trail, Clayton
- **City of Concord Police Dept.**
1350 Galindo St., Concord
- **Sheriff's Field Operations Building**
1980 Muir Rd., Martinez
- **Contra Costa Medical Center**
Sheriff's Substation
(check with deputy on duty)
2500 Alhambra Ave., Martinez
- **Town of Danville Police Dept.**
510 La Gonda Way, Danville
- **City of Martinez Police Dept.**
525 Henrietta St., Martinez
- **Town of Moraga Police Dept.**
329 Rheem Blvd., Moraga
- **City of Orinda Police Dept.**
22 Orinda Way, Orinda
- **City of Pleasant Hill Police Dept.**
330 Civic Dr., Pleasant Hill
- **City of San Ramon Police Dept.**
2401 Crow Canyon Rd., San Ramon
- **Walnut Creek City Hall**
1666 North Main St., Walnut Creek

To ensure privacy, transfer prescribed pills to a sealable plastic bag before depositing. To prevent spills, leave liquids in original bottles (cross out personal information) and seal within a plastic bag.

For more information, call 1-800-646-1431 or visit www.centralsan.org.



New Walnut Creek Facility: Worth the Wait

About two years ago the men, women, and equipment of our Collection System Operations (CSO) Field Services Division temporarily relocated to our Martinez campus while their Walnut Creek facility on Springbrook Road was torn down and a new one constructed in its place.

Two years is a long time to be working out of a temporary base of operations, but there was no disruption of service, and the CSO team has finally moved into their new facility. It was worth the wait!

When the original facility was built in 1956, we didn't have as many cleaning and maintenance demands, our sewer system was not as big or complex, and environmental regulations were not nearly as stringent as they are now. As the District grew, so did the CSO staff, equipment, and technological needs.

The District took advantage of the economic climate in which construction costs were down, and designed and built a modern facility that is ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)-compliant and pre-wired for the latest computer networking technologies. It not only enables us to serve our communities better, but also incorporates energy efficiency and resource conservation practices to make it "green."

It is the first building in Walnut Creek to have a green roof which uses drought-tolerant plants to help it stay cool during the summer and absorb rainwater to reduce runoff during the winter.

The District expects the building to receive LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification within a few months. LEED is an internationally recognized green building certification system that verifies a building was designed and built using strategies to improve performance in energy savings, water efficiency, carbon dioxide emissions reduction, indoor environmental quality, and stewardship of resources and sensitivity to their impacts.

Designed With the Environment in Mind

Here are some of the features that will allow the new facility to be LEED certified:

- Permeable paving for the parking lot and landscaping elements designed to remove silt and contaminants from runoff water.
- Low-flow toilets and showers, drip irrigation and drought-tolerant plants (conserves water).
- Skylights, glass and aluminum on exterior walls (uses more natural light).
- Energy-conserving automatic window shades that lower when a specific temperature is reached.
- Energy-efficient heating & air-conditioning (improves indoor air quality while using less energy).
- Energy-efficient solar collectors to supplement water heating for showers.
- Hydronic (circulating water) heating in the warehouse floor (reduces energy use).
- Recycled materials used in countertops and some cabinets.
- Concrete demolished from the old facilities was recycled and reused onsite.



CSO: Maintaining The Flow

The Central Contra Costa Sanitary District's vast collection system includes more than 1,500 miles of underground sewer pipelines ranging in size from 6 to 102 inches in diameter. It's the mission of the Collection System Operations (CSO) Department to ensure a constant, efficient flow of wastewater through those pipelines to our treatment plant in Martinez.

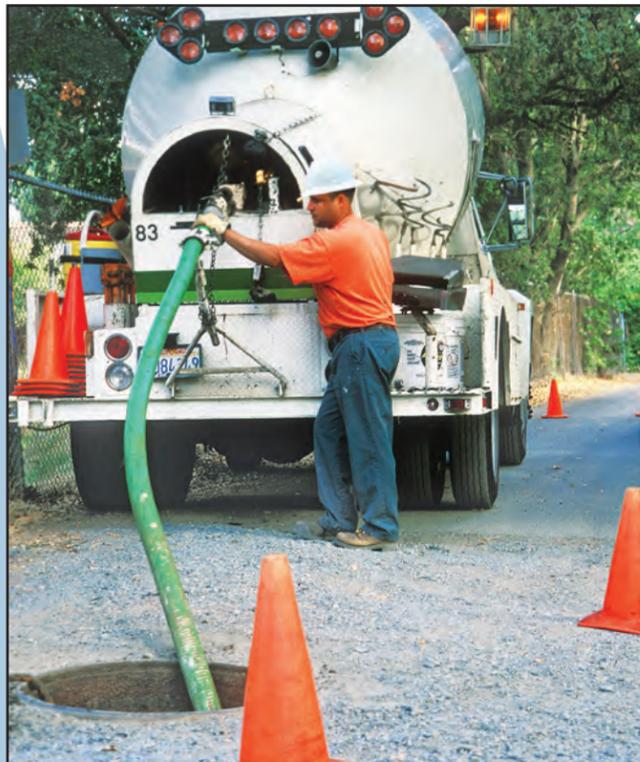
The District achieved a record low number of only 37 sewer overflows in 2011. To put that in perspective, consider this: a collection system is considered "well operated" by regulatory agencies if it has three or fewer overflows per 100 miles of sewer. Our 37 overflows equate to 2.46 overflows per 100 miles of sewer, so we're doing great – especially when you consider the age of some of our pipes and the number of trees in our service area (with roots that love to clog sewers)!

CLEANING & MAINTENANCE SERVICES

CSO crews cleaned and maintained more than 4,242,243 feet of pipeline last year using specialized trucks, equipment, and techniques.

The crews' major challenges include:

- Roots, the number-one cause of clogged sewer pipes.
- Grease, the number-two cause of clogged sewer pipes.
- Disposable wipes and other debris that clog sewer pipes and pumps (see article on page 7).



TV INSPECTION

Often, the first step in detecting the reason for a blocked or underperforming sewer line involves Close Circuit Television/Locating. When a problem is suspected, a small video camera on wheels, with a locating device attached to it, is pulled through the sewer line. Viewing the images on a remote television monitor (and recording them for future planning purposes), CSO crew members can pinpoint problem areas within the pipes and determine the best corrective action to take. TV inspections are also performed on newly constructed lines to verify the quality of construction.



SPOT REPAIRS

CSO crews make spot repairs of damaged pipelines.

VEHICLE MAINTENANCE

Routine maintenance and repairs of CSO trucks and other District vehicles is performed by CSO staff.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE SERVICES

Overflows/sewage spills are rare, but when they occur, they must be dealt with immediately. Our CSO staff provides 24-hour service and emergency response within 45 minutes, day or night.



PUMPING STATIONS

Most of the wastewater coming to our treatment plant flows through our collection system by force of gravity. Hilly areas, however, require the wastewater to be pumped until gravity can take over. Operators maintain 17 pumping stations throughout our service area that lift the wastewater over steep terrain. Altogether, these facilities pump nearly 20 million gallons per day through the system into our plant.

UTILITY LOCATOR SERVICES

CSO crews perform Underground Service Alert searches to locate and identify our pipelines for other utilities that may be digging near them.

Protect Your Property!

Sewage backups and overflows are rare and unexpected. But that doesn't mean you can't plan ahead and protect yourself and your property.

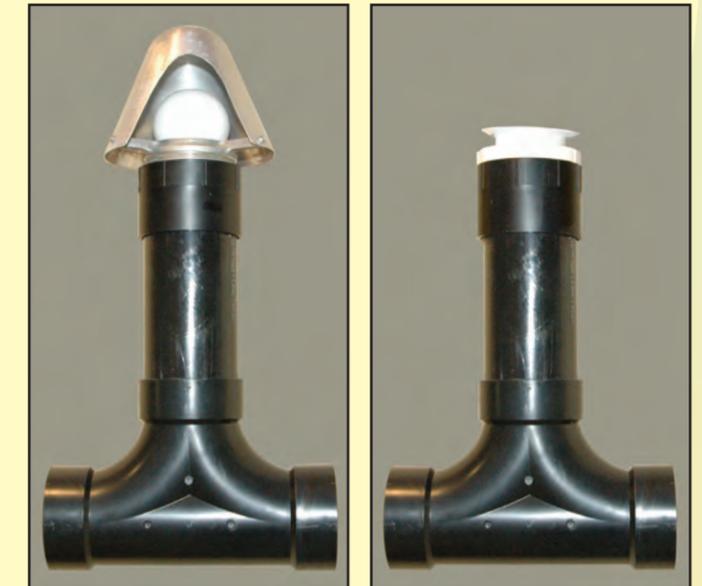
How? By making sure an **Overflow Protection Device (OPD)** is installed on the private side-sewer (lateral) that connects your home to the public sewer main.

With an OPD installed, sewage backing up in the pipe from the direction of the street will be released through the device into your yard, rather than through drains in your home. (It will not help if the pipe is clogged between your drain and the OPD.)

The District Code requires this device, and we urge you to have one installed now if your property doesn't already have it.

These devices are available at plumbing supply stores. Because proper elevation and location are critical for the device to function properly, we recommend installation by a licensed plumber. Once installed, the OPD should be kept clear of obstructions such as dirt or vegetation that might interfere with its operation.

For more information, please call our Permit Counter staff at (925) 229-7371.



There are different styles of Overflow Protection Devices. The "mushroom" style, pictured left, has been cut away to show the ball that sits on the pipe opening inside the metal covering. The style pictured at right (shown with the top popped up) is best for installing in driveways or other areas where above-ground protrusions are undesirable.

Thank You for Keeping Hazardous Wastes Out of the Environment!

Percent of residents that used the HHW Facility in FY 2010-2011

Clayton	17.4%
Concord	15.2%
Danville	14.0%
Lafayette	23.1%
Martinez	35.3%
Moraga	15.8%
Orinda	18.7%
Pleasant Hill	19.8%
San Ramon	6.0%
Walnut Creek	15.5%
Unincorporated	7.8%

Since it opened in 1997, residents and small businesses have made hundreds of thousands of trips to our Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility, bringing in more than 24 million pounds of hazardous waste for safe disposal or recycling!

During fiscal year 2010-2011 alone, the facility collected and processed more than 2 million pounds of hazardous waste. This included:

- 1,884 mercury-containing thermometers
- 283,137 feet of fluorescent lamps (53½ miles!)
- 67,315 pounds of car batteries
- 58,704 pounds of household batteries (29½ tons!)
- About 102,500 gallons of latex and oil-based paint

Over 90% of the collected hazardous waste was reused or recycled.

In addition, more than 32,000 pounds of unwanted medications have been collected and safely disposed of since February 2009 via the Pharmaceutical Disposal Program and its 11 collection sites throughout our service area (see locations on page 4).

Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility

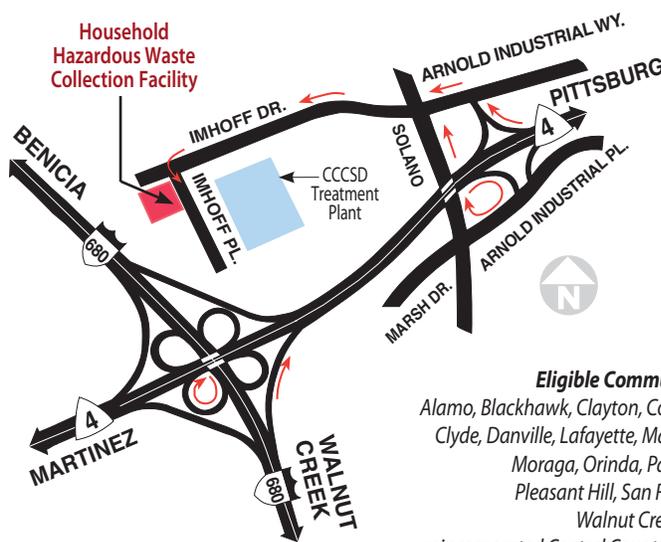
4797 Imhoff Place, Martinez, CA 94553-4392

HOURS

Residents: Monday – Saturday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
(Reuse Room closes at 3:30 p.m.)

Businesses: Monday – Saturday, by appointment only

1-800-646-1431



Eligible Communities

Alamo, Blackhawk, Clayton, Concord, Clyde, Danville, Lafayette, Martinez, Moraga, Orinda, Pacheco, Pleasant Hill, San Ramon, Walnut Creek and unincorporated Central County areas.

- From Hwy. 4 take the Solano Way exit.
- From I-680 take Hwy. 4 East to Solano Way exit.



For Fever Thermometers, Digitals Rule!

Mercury is highly toxic. An old-fashioned mercury fever thermometer contains enough mercury to contaminate more than 200 million gallons of water. If mercury goes down a drain (perhaps when a thermometer breaks in a sink), it can contaminate wastewater that flows to Suisun Bay. The treatment process simply cannot remove all traces of mercury.

The sale of mercury fever thermometers is banned in California, but some people still have them at home.

If you bring your mercury thermometer to our Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility for safe disposal, we'll give you a free digital fever thermometer to take its place.

For more information, please call 1-800-646-1431.



Spring Cleaning? Get Free Products!

Did you know our Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility has a Reuse Room full of products that can help you with your spring cleaning?

And they're all free!

Why? Because one of our goals is to recycle as many of the items brought to the Facility as possible. Our Reuse Room is stocked with items brought in for disposal that are still in useable condition. These products are free for the taking!

The inventory often includes items such as paint, wood stain, garden products, and a wide variety of cleansers. The items and quantities vary depending on what people bring in, but our shelves are rarely bare.

The next time you bring your household hazardous waste items to the facility for disposal, check out the free products in the Reuse Room. You may find just what you need for sprucing up your home or garden!

The Reuse Room is open Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Call 1-800-646-1431 for more information. (Please note we cannot provide inventory information over the phone.)



Cleaning Out Your Garage? Bring Us Your Stuff!

Got leftover paint? Want to get rid of it? How about solvents, wood stain, paint remover, used motor oil, batteries, brake and transmission fluids, antifreeze, pesticides, herbicides or old household cleaning products?

These are all forms of hazardous waste — substances that can poison, corrode, react, or ignite when handled improperly — and they can threaten public health and the environment. We never want these materials to end up in our landfills or waterways, so bring them to us! We want this nasty stuff! Last year we collected and processed more than two million pounds of hazardous waste – recycling 90% of it.

Bring these items to our Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility in Martinez. It's open Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and there's no drop-off fee for residents of Central Contra Costa County. (Businesses must have an appointment and will be charged a nominal drop-off fee based on the type and quantity of material they bring.)

There are some restrictions on the types of waste we can accept, and State guidelines limit the size of container to five gallons or less and the amount you can transport in your car to 15 gallons or 125 pounds. Before you load up and head for the facility, call 1-800-646-1431 or visit our website at www.centrsan.org/hhw for more information.



Opening a Business? Don't Forget Sewer Fees!



New business owners can face a myriad of start-up expenses before they open their doors. One expense that is sometimes overlooked is sewer capacity fees.

Customers must pay sewer capacity fees when a building's plumbing facilities are first connected to the Central Contra Costa Sanitary District (CCCSD) public sewer system, or whenever an existing building or business is modified in a way that changes the amount or strength of the wastewater discharged to the public sewer. An example of such a change is when a deli or sandwich shop is converted into a restaurant. In this case, the sewer capacity fees due would be about \$16,000 for every 1,000 square feet of floor space in the new restaurant.

The capacity fee is charged so that the customer "buys in" to all of CCCSD's assets (pipelines, facilities, etc.) in proportion to the capacity

needs of their particular business. In a nutshell, this one-time fee is your fair share of the cost of these assets which are needed to collect, treat and safely recycle or dispose of your wastewater.

If you are expanding your commercial building, changing your business operation, or adding more living units to your property, you may have to pay additional capacity fees.

Our Permit team is committed to serving your needs and making the process as efficient as possible

If your property is located in an area where gravity alone cannot deliver your wastewater to the treatment plant, you will be charged an additional pumped zone fee. This fee is for your share of the cost of pumping stations and other facilities needed to augment gravity sewers. For the deli-to-restaurant conversion example, the additional fee would be about \$2,400 for every 1,000 square feet of floor space in the new restaurant.

Whether you are a business owner, developer, or contractor who wants to hook up to the sewer system, our Permit team is committed to serving your needs and making the process as efficient as possible. Please contact them at (925) 229-7371 if you have any questions about your fees.

More info online!

Go to
centralsan.org/index.cfm?navid=147&

How to Make Greener Cleaners

Winter is over, and for many homeowners that means it's time for spring cleaning. Unfortunately, many cleaning products contain metals, solvents, and toxic chemicals. If poured down your drain, these can pollute Suisun Bay because our wastewater treatment process is designed to treat biological wastes only; it cannot remove all traces of such pollutants before the treated water flows into the Bay.

Many cleaners also contain unnecessary antibacterial agents (which are technically pesticides) that can actually make bacteria more resistant to antibacterial drugs.

But don't worry, we have alternatives for you that use baking soda, borax, lemon juice and other ingredients that are friendlier to our water environment. These home-made solutions are also less expensive than commercial cleaning products.

• **ALL-PURPOSE CLEANER:** Baking soda mixed with a little water (paste consistency). For stubborn stains, work it in and let it sit for a while before you remove with a damp cloth or sponge.

• **DISINFECTANT:** Full-strength white distilled vinegar. Spray or rub on surfaces, door knobs, etc. Alternative: ½ cup Borax in 1 gallon hot water.

• **DRAIN CLEANER:** Baking soda, salt, vinegar, boiling water. Pour ½ cup baking soda and ¼ cup salt into drain, add ½ cup vinegar, cover drain while fizzing (let sit overnight for best results), then flush with boiling water. To clear clogs, use a Zip-It drain cleaning tool, plumber's snake, or plunger. Note: Do NOT use the baking soda combination or a plunger after using a commercial drain opener. *Tip: To avoid clogs, use drain strainers to trap food particles and hair; collect grease in cans rather than pouring it down the drain.*

• **GLASS CLEANER:** 2 cups water, 1 cup white distilled vinegar and 1 teaspoon liquid soap or detergent. Put in spray bottle; use to remove wax residue left by commercial window cleaners. After that residue is removed, you can leave out the soap for future cleaning. Alternative: lemon juice and water.

• **GREASE REMOVER:** Lemon juice or vinegar. Spray or douse, let sit a few minutes, then scrub.

• **LIME & MINERAL DEPOSIT REMOVER:** Vinegar and paper towels. Hard lime deposits around faucets can be softened for easy removal by covering the deposits with vinegar-soaked paper towels. Leave paper towels on for one hour before cleaning.

• **MILDEW REMOVER:** Undiluted white distilled vinegar. Use it on a cloth or sponge mop to wipe down surfaces.

• **OVEN CLEANER:** Baking soda and very fine steel wool. Sprinkle water followed by a layer of baking soda. Let stand overnight. Rub gently with a very fine steel wool pad. Wipe off scum with dry paper towels or sponge. Rinse well and wipe dry.

• **SCUFFMARK/WATERMARK REMOVER:** Toothpaste. Use to remove scuffmarks from floors and watermarks from wood furniture.



Tip: wiping with newspaper instead of paper towels prevents streaks.

Now that you'll be using these home-made alternatives, you can dispose of your unwanted commercial cleansers (as well as paint, pesticides, batteries solvents, cleansers, and other potentially hazardous household products) at our Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility. Never put them down the drain or in the trash. Call 1-800-646-1431 for more information.



About CCCSD

Our mission as a Special District is to protect public health and the environment. We do this by collecting and treating wastewater, providing recycled water, and promoting pollution prevention. Our treatment plant in Martinez collects, treats, and disinfects an average of 45 million gallons of wastewater every day. Some treated wastewater is recycled (treated further) for irrigation use on golf courses and parks; the rest is released into Suisun Bay. We also operate a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility and sponsor 11 pharmaceutical disposal collection sites.

Where to Call...

General information	(925) 228-9500 or www.centralsan.org
Sewer overflows	(925) 933-0955 or 933-0990
Treatment Plant InfoLine (Report Odors)	(925) 335-7703
Household Hazardous Waste InfoLine	(800) 646-1431
Sewer connection permits/Permit Counter	(925) 229-7371
To report illegal discharges into sewer system	(925) 229-7288 (during business hours) (925) 229-7214 (after hours)
Source Control	(925) 229-7288
Job Hotline	(925) 229-7109 or www.centralsan.org
Student Education Programs	(925) 229-7310 or www.centralsan.org
Public InfoLine	(925) 335-7702 or www.centralsan.org



CCCSD serves 455,400 customers within its 140-square-mile service area.

-  Sewage collection and wastewater treatment (and HHW service) for 321,800 people
-  Wastewater treatment for 133,600 residents in Concord and Clayton by contract and HHW service
-  HHW disposal only
-  CCCSD's Headquarters, treatment plant, CSO Division, and HHW Collection Facility are located in Martinez

Board of Directors

James A. Nejedly, President

- **David R. Williams**, President Pro Tem • **Barbara D. Hockett**, Director
- **Mario M. Menesini**, Director • **Michael R. McGill**, Director

Board meetings are open to the public and are held on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month at 2 p.m. in the CCCSD Board Room, 5019 Imhoff Place, Martinez.

James M. Kelly, General Manager

The Central Contra Costa Sanitary District PIPELINE

Written and designed by CCCSD to communicate pollution prevention messages to the people and communities we serve

Michael Scahill, Editor • **Bonnie Lowe**, Writer
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PIPELINE is printed with
soy-based inks on Recycled Paper

