

Sewage Overflow from Private Property



When a private sewer pipe breaks, it is imperative to control, contain and capture the overflow to prevent pollutants from entering the storm drain system, which directs rainwater to local waterways and the ocean. Pollutants can include sewage water, grease globs, hairballs, tree roots, residue, leaves and other organic or chemical materials – all of which can be harmful to water quality and marine life.

Sewer Laterals

The sewer lateral is a pipe-system that carries used wastewater from your home, business or property to the City's sanitary sewer collection and treatment system. Property owners are responsible for the proper maintenance of the sewer lateral that extends from their property to the City sewer main. Repairs to the lateral that are made within the private property line are the responsibility of the property owner. All repairs to the private lateral in the City Right-of-Way will be completed by the City of San Diego upon proof from a licensed plumber.

Sewer Stoppages, Breaks and Overflows on Your Property

Turn off water immediately to control the flow. Provide containment (sandbags, dirt, etc.) to prevent flow from discharging into the storm drain system. You may need to call a plumbing professional for assistance. It is the property owner's responsibility to capture any remaining sewage overflow that may still be on the curb, gutter or street. Any sewage must be disposed of into the sanitary sewer system as soon as possible. This is a public health hazard. Be sure to check and clean the curbs and gutters beyond your property – all the way to the nearest storm drain inlets.

*Note that bodily entry into storm drains is considered “confined space entry,” and is not recommended without adherence to applicable regulations. See the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) website for more information. <http://www.osha.gov>



STORMWATER REGULATIONS

It is illegal to discharge pollutants into the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) without proper controls (San Diego Municipal Code §43.0304). Penalties associated with these violations can be up to \$10,000 per day per incident.

Sewer Stoppages, Breaks and Overflows in the City Right-of-Way

If you believe that the stoppage, break or overflow affecting your property is coming from pipes in the City right-of-way, you must have a licensed plumber verify that it is in the City's domain. If you observe sewage seeping from a City manhole call (619) 515-3525.



Flushing Sewer Lines (e.g. Roding, Jetting, Snaking)

Clean-out caps are intended to be used as relief valves to prevent sewage from flowing into your home as well as to provide access to maintain your sewer lateral. When flushing sewer lines, all wastewater, dislodged materials and debris must be contained on your property, recaptured and properly disposed of.

Runoff conveyed and discharged by municipal stormwater systems has been identified by local, regional and national research programs as one of the principal causes of water quality problems in urban areas such as the City of San Diego.

This runoff potentially contains a host of pollutants including trash, debris, bacteria, viruses, oil, grease, sediments, nutrients, metals and toxic chemicals.

These contaminants can adversely affect the beneficial uses of receiving creeks, coastal waters, associated wildlife habitat and public health. Urban runoff pollution is a problem during rainy seasons and also throughout the year due to urban water uses that discharge non-stormwater runoff via dry weather flows to the stormwater conveyance system.

Keep Pollutants Out of Storm Drains

Many people think that when water flows into a storm drain it is treated, but the storm drain system and the sanitary sewer system are not connected. Everything that enters storm drains flows untreated directly into our creeks, rivers, bays, beaches and, ultimately, the ocean. Stormwater often contains pollutants - including chemicals, trash and vehicle fluids - all of which contaminate our beaches and harm fish and wildlife.

Whether at home or work, you can help reduce pollution and improve water quality by using the above Best Management Practices as part of your daily cleaning and maintenance routine.

If you see an illegal discharge into the storm drain system, call the City of San Diego Stormwater Hotline at (619) 527-7500 or visit our website at thinkblue.org

