



► Sewers Are Making Headlines

PAGE 1



PAGE 2

► Win FREE Sewer Service For A Year!



PAGE 2

► USD's Environmental Compliance Team Protects The Bay



PAGE 4

► No Drugs Down The Drain! Safe Medicine Disposal Week is October 4-11

CUSTOMER FOCUS

Union Sanitary District

VOLUME IV | AUTUMN | 2008

USD's Latest Awards

- California Climate Action Registry "Climate Action Leader" Award for the District's efforts to reduce its greenhouse gas "footprint" on the environment.
- EPA Regional Administrator's Environmental Award for our pharmaceutical pollution prevention activities.
- Government Finance Officers Association Financial Reporting Award for excellence in financial reporting.
- National Institute for Government Purchasing Award for excellence in purchasing.

Sewers Are In The News

DURING THE PAST WINTER, storms in the Bay Area resulted in increased flows not just in storm drains, but in sanitary sewers as well. USD is happy to report that we had no weather related spills or overflows during those winter rains. However there was a large spill from wastewater treatment facilities in Marin County. Nearly than 2,500,000 gallons of untreated sewage overflowed into Richardson Bay, prompting health warnings, headlines, and new legislation. The primary cause of problems is old sewers in need of repair or replacement. **USD has one of the lowest spill rates in the State of California.** Over the last 15 years, we have repaired, replaced or installed special protective liners on many miles of pipe to ensure that sewage flows freely and stays in the pipes where it belongs.



MANHOLE COVER THEFT is now plaguing Sanitary Districts around the country. With the downturn in the economy, a mini-crime wave has developed in the metal salvage business. People are collecting (and

often stealing) aluminum, copper, and iron and turning it in to metal salvage companies for cash. A 100-200 pound manhole cover brings \$10 to \$15. Hardly seems worth the effort! In addition to requiring replacement at about \$200, a missing manhole cover is a serious safety problem for the public. Vehicles driving over an open manhole can be severely damaged, and a person inadvertently stepping into an open manhole can be seriously injured or killed. **If you see an open manhole, call USD** or the Police immediately. You can reach the District by telephone 24/7 at (510) 477-7500.

MODERN TECHNOLOGY has made it possible to detect minute amounts of pharmaceutical and personal care products in wastewater effluents and receiving waters. While there have been no established health risks to these compounds, one way you can help to keep pharmaceuticals out of the Bay is by not flushing unwanted medicines down the drain. **See page four for information about Safe Medicine Disposal Week, October 4th - 11th.** USD will continue to track research on this issue.



USD's Environmental Compliance Team

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USD works with over 850 Tri-City restaurants to keep fats, oils and grease (FOG) out of the sewer, where they can cause overflows in the community and affect our treatment processes. We recommend proper grease removal devices and good housekeeping practices to keep sewers running freely.

If you have questions, please call us at: (510) 477-7500.

Protecting San Francisco Bay from pollutants is an important part of USD's stewardship of the environment. Our Environmental Compliance Team (EC) works closely with businesses and industries to help them remove contaminants that could harm our treatment plant or the Bay. EC has been nominated for a National Pretreatment Program of the Year Award by the EPA for the past two years.

Most treatment plants, including USD's, are designed to remove biological wastes, not toxic byproducts of industrial processes. Federal, state and local regulatory requirements limit the levels of pollutants that industries can discharge to the sewer system.

Environmental Compliance Inspectors are technical resources for local industries, keeping an eye out for pollution prevention opportunities by suggesting substitutions of non-toxic materials to replace contaminants, monitoring how chemicals are stored, advising best-management practices for housekeeping, and identifying ways industries can capture and reuse byproducts of their processes. USD requires many industries to remove pollutants before they enter the waste stream

by "pretreating" their discharge. EC staff works with industries that produce waste streams containing pollutants such as metals, pesticides, mercury and organics to set up an on-site removal process. This way the pollutants are removed at the source, where they are the most concentrated.



USD continually surveys the Tri-City area to find industries that may need a discharge permit and/or pretreatment system. EC inspectors monitor industries through on-site visits and effluent sampling. Inspectors must understand the

technology of each industry's processes and stay informed about new activities that may produce wastewater. They advise product substitutions and process modifications that could change the waste stream so that it won't require treatment, and recommend ways to recycle and conserve water.

EC annually awards Certificates of Merit to recognize industries that have met or exceeded USD's environmental regulatory requirements. Several industries have met these standards for many consecutive years.

Win Our Contest And Have Some FUN With Your Refund!!

Visit our website at www.unionsanitary.ca.gov, search our pages to answer a few fun questions and you'll be eligible to win a year of free sewer service! For residential customers only.

**Win FREE
Sewer Service
For A Year!
A \$259 Value**

What Could You Buy With Your Prize?

65 Gallons of Gasoline

An IPOD & Accessories

A Flat-Screen TV Monitor

A Mountain Bike

25 BART Trips to San Francisco (and back!)

WHAT HAPPENS TO WASTEWATER?

Each day, up to 30 million gallons of water used by Tri-City homes and businesses makes its way through more than 770 miles of sewer lines to USD's Alvarado Wastewater treatment facility in Union City. The journey can take anywhere from a few minutes to 12 hours. At the treatment plant, it spends about six hours traveling through the liquid treatment process, undergoes disinfection with bleach, and then embarks on another eight-hour journey through an underground pipeline that ultimately returns the treated water to San Francisco Bay.

About ten percent of USD's treated effluent provides fresh water to the Hayward Marsh, a reclaimed wetland just north of Highway 92. The rest is combined with effluent from other east bay wastewater agencies in a single large pipeline, which is managed by the East Bay Discharger's Authority (EBDA). All of the agencies that use the pipeline contribute to the cost of operating and maintaining the joint EBDA facilities. The water undergoes one final process step to remove residual chlorine at a facility near the San Leandro Marina in order to protect marine life. From there, the pipeline travels over seven miles into San Francisco Bay, where the effluent is diffused in a deep shipping channel.

As the wastewater was making its way through the treatment plant, solids were separated from it at each stage along the way. Solids are

treated using a biological process that requires much more time than the process used to treat the water - over 20 days. Each day more than 65,000 pounds of solids arrive at the plant with the wastewater. During treatment a majority of the organic solids are converted into methane gas. This reduces the total volume of solids that must be hauled offsite while providing the plant with a source of renewable energy. USD uses the methane gas to generate electricity, producing 30% of the power required to operate the treatment plant.



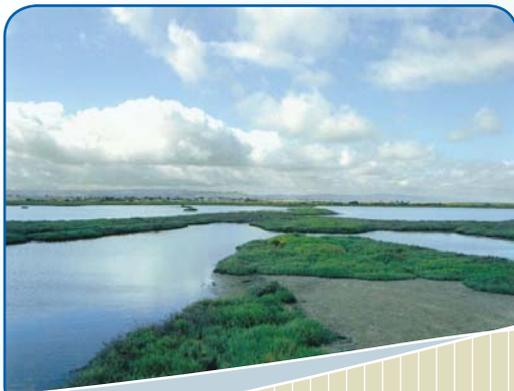
Once the solids treatment process is complete, the excess free water is removed using a centrifuge and the remaining "cake," known as biosolids, is utilized as a nutrient-rich fertilizer. Two to three truckloads of biosolids are hauled from the plant each day. Most of the biosolids are applied to farmland in Solano County and Sacramento County on non-food crops such as alfalfa. Approximately 10% of the biosolids are sent to a compost facility in Merced County. These biosolids, combined with wood chips and recycled green waste, are further processed into a Class A compost that is sold in bulk to farmers. The Class A compost can be safely used on farmland without any restrictions.

Got Questions? Our Website Has Answers!

We've received great customer feedback from our previous newsletters, and we appreciate the interest you have in knowing more about us. We've provided answers to many of your questions on our website at www.unionsanitary.ca.gov.

Your requests for information about preventing and reporting sewer odors have resulted in a new web page with tips to keep your sewers healthy. Information about sewer overflow prevention devices is on our What's New page. We've also posted sewer safety tips for homeowners, USD's budget and finance data, employment opportunities and District news.

Keep browsing to find our latest updates!



USD's Mission:

To safely and responsibly collect and treat wastewater for the Tri-Cities while protecting human health and improving the environment in a way that benefits our customers, employees and the community.

○ SERVICE | ○ WATER QUALITY | ○ ENVIRONMENT

Protecting Our Communities and the San Francisco Bay

WWW.UNIONSANITARY.CA.GOV

Your Views Are Welcome

Meetings of the
USD Board of Directors
are open to the public

- | Meetings are held on the second and fourth Mondays of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Boardroom at our Administrative Headquarters.
- | Visit our website for the upcoming agenda: www.unionsanitary.ca.gov.
- | Our newsletter can also be found on our website.



Protecting Our Communities and the San Francisco Bay
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Win FREE
Sewer Service
For A Year!
Details Inside

YOU Can Help USD Protect The Environment!

Safe Medicine Disposal Week is October 4 - 11

Don't flush your prescription medications down the drain! Treatment doesn't remove 100% of all substances from wastewater. Some of your expired or unwanted medications could flow into the Bay where they could harm wildlife.

USD is participating in a statewide "No Drugs Down The Drain" event that will let you turn in medications at selected pharmacies October 4th - 11th.



Look for ads in local newspapers with pharmacy locations. You can also dispose of non-controlled substances at a Household Hazardous Waste Facility. For more information, contact us at (510) 477-7621.

Are You Brushing Your Teeth With Pesticide?

Many antibacterial soaps, household cleaning solutions and personal care products - even toothpastes - contain triclosan. Triclosan is an EPA-registered pesticide that is toxic to aquatic organisms. It can't be removed by wastewater treatment and can end up in San Francisco Bay, where it affects wildlife.

You don't need antibacterial soaps to kill germs, and they can't kill viruses that cause colds and flu! In fact, antibacterials encourage the growth of antibiotic resistant microbes, or "superbugs". Vigorously washing your hands is your best protection. Alcohol-based gel cleaners without triclosan are another safer alternative.

Read product labels carefully and avoid soaps, cosmetics, deodorants and toothpastes that contain triclosan. Dispose of products containing triclosan at your local Household Hazardous Waste Facility.

Take Your Household Hazardous Waste To Fremont's New Facility

Alameda County residents can keep potentially hazardous materials out of the waste stream and storm drains by disposing of them at Fremont's new Household Hazardous Waste Facility at 41149 Boyce Road.

Drop off latex and oil-based paints, adhesives, used oil and filters, pesticides, fertilizers, cleaners, fluorescent tubes, expired medications and many other items.



Materials must be packaged in sturdy, non-leaking closed containers no greater than five gallons or 50 lbs. in size. For more information and a comprehensive list of acceptable items for disposal, call 800-606-6606, or go to www.stopwaste.org.

