

# 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?**

**How to avoid associated penalties & fines**

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

- 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 from entering the sewer main when working in our service area, **please call us** at (650) 321-0384, 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.
- Don't open manholes. Hazardous sewer gases from manholes are odorless, undetectable and can be deadly. Call us to open manholes for you and please note that discharge into a publicly-owned manhole requires a permit. Contact our Source Control Section at (650) 321-0384, for an application.

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

- 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!



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

**Help us help you...**

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

**(650) 321-0384**



SERVING AREAS IN MENLO PARK, PORTOLA VALLEY, ATHERTON, EAST PALO ALTO, REDWOOD CITY, WOODSIDE AND UNINCORPORATED SAN MATEO COUNTY



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

