








Fact Sheet

Central Contra Costa Sanitary District (CCCSD) is a public utility dedicated to protecting public health and the environment by collecting and treating wastewater and returning clean water to the environment.

Our service area includes Alamo, Clayton, Clyde, Concord, Danville, Lafayette, Martinez, Moraga, Orinda, Pacheco, Pleasant Hill, San Ramon, and Walnut Creek.



CCCSD serves 456,200 people within its 140-square-mile service area.

-  Sewage collection and wastewater treatment (and HHW collection service) for 456,200 people
-  Wastewater treatment for 134,015 residents in Concord and Clayton by contract and HHW collection service
-  HHW collection service only
-  CCCSD's Headquarters, treatment plant, and HHW Collection Facility are located in Martinez
-  CCCSD's Collection System Operations Department (sewer maintenance) is based in Walnut Creek

For more information, call CCCSD's Source Control Section at (925) 229-7288 or visit our website at www.centrialsan.org

Pharmaceutical Waste Disposal

For Businesses

This fact sheet provides guidance on the disposal of waste pharmaceuticals by businesses that dispense or sell them (physician/dentist offices, medical clinics, hospitals, convalescent homes, care facilities, hospices, veterinary clinics, etc.). The information applies to prescription as well as over-the-counter medications.

Background

Studies show that pharmaceutical compounds are present in our water environment. When consumed as intended, a percentage of most pharmaceuticals, whether applied externally or ingested, will be washed or excreted into the sewer system. In addition, unused pharmaceuticals are often flushed down toilets or poured down drains.

Our wastewater treatment plant is designed to treat human waste and biodegradable material; it is not equipped to remove all traces of pharmaceutical compounds and chemicals. A portion of those contaminants will pass through the treatment plant and be discharged into Suisun Bay. These compounds are known to pose risks to aquatic organisms.

While we cannot control the amount of pharmaceutical compounds entering the sewer system after being applied or ingested, we can and should control those that are flushed or poured down drains.

Our Hazardous Waste Facility Does Not Accept Pharmaceuticals

Due to legal restrictions on the possession of controlled substances, which many medications contain, CCCSD does not accept medications of any kind through our Small Business Hazardous Waste Disposal Program or at our Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility in Martinez.

Best Management Practices for Pharmaceutical Disposal

Please help us to protect the water environment by following these procedures when disposing of your unused pharmaceuticals.

◆ These Can Go Down the Drain

- Saline or electrolyte solutions with no pharmaceuticals added.
- Dialysis wastes.
- Urine samples containing added pharmaceuticals.
- Water used to rinse containers

◆ Do Not Dispose of Drugs Down the Drain

- Do **NOT** flush pharmaceuticals down the toilet.
- Do **NOT** pour/rinse pharmaceuticals down the sink drain.
- Clean up floor spills involving pharmaceuticals in a way that prevents contaminants from entering floor drains.
- Do **NOT** flush sharps down the toilet.



◆ Use These Disposal Options

- Return unwanted and unopened pharmaceuticals to suppliers/manufacturers or via reverse distributors whenever possible. (There may be some value associated to unopened, unwanted and/or unexpired medications.)
- Contract with a registered medical waste hauler to pick up unwanted pharmaceuticals as medical waste.
- As a last resort, contact your solid waste disposal company to determine if you can dispose of uncontrolled substances in the trash using the following procedures:
 - Remove drugs from their original packaging;
 - Put them in a sealable bag or container;
 - Mix in a liquid or undesirable substance such as garbage;
 - Seal the container and place it in the trash.

Disposal of pharmaceuticals to the CCCSD sanitary sewer system is not authorized. The following table is provided as a courtesy to present alternative disposal methods for your company to consider. The information presented is based on research conducted and information available to CCCSD staff at the time this document was developed. The table does not address pharmaceuticals that are classified as RCRA regulated hazardous wastes since this classification would require disposal via a hazardous waste contractor. Your company should consult with appropriate resources (attorney, regulatory compliance officer) to determine the appropriate disposal method to be used.

Alternative disposal methods for waste or off-specification pharmaceuticals				
Facility/Service Type	Return to Supplier	Return via Reverse Distributor	Use medical waste disposal service	Disposal to trash using BMPs as a last resort
Hospital	U	U/C	U	N/A
Medical Clinic	U	U/C	U	N/A
Medical Office	U	U/C	U	N/A
Dental Office	U	U/C	U	N/A
*Convalescent Home	U	U/C	U	U/C
*Assisted Care Facilities	N/A	U/C	U	U/C
*Hospice Care	N/A			U/C
Veterinary Clinics	U	U/C	U	N/A

U = uncontrolled pharmaceuticals **U/C** = both uncontrolled and controlled pharmaceuticals
C = controlled pharmaceuticals **N/A** = option not available

** How the waste medication is to be managed depends on who administers the medication. If the medication is self-administered, it can be managed as home-generated. If a doctor or nurse who works for your company administers it, the medication will need to be managed as if it was generated by your company.*

Some haulers that accept biohazard or medical wastes from businesses include:

Integrated Waste Control
(510) 583-7980

Stericycle
(866) 783-7422

Veolia Environmental Services
(626) 334-5117

All Chemical Disposal
(408) 363-1660

Note: The products and companies listed in this document are for your convenience. Inclusion does not imply an endorsement from CCCSD, and the list may not represent a complete list of products or companies providing these services. Also, the information above is likely to change without notice.

Help Your Customers, Patients, and Employees

Protecting local water resources from pharmaceutical contaminants is a priority not only for us, but for the people in the communities we serve. Your customers, patients and employees are concerned about this issue and will appreciate your actions to help protect the environment.

Please consider doing the following:

- Remind your patients/customers to take all prescribed drugs as directed, and don't over prescribe. As you know, some people stop taking medications prematurely when they begin to feel better. Many patients use less than half of the pain medications prescribed to them. In addition to the potential health risks, this tendency may increase the amount of pharmaceuticals being improperly disposed of by consumers.
- Advise your patients/customers to buy their over-the-counter drugs in smaller quantities. For example, they shouldn't buy a 500-count bottle of aspirin just because it's more economical, if they are unlikely to consume them all prior to the expiration date.
- Offer to accept and properly dispose of your customers', patients', and employees' unwanted pharmaceuticals using the procedures in this fact sheet, if legal for your company to do so.



Questions?

Thank you for helping to protect our environment! If you have any questions or need additional information, please call our Source Control Section at (925) 229-7288.