



# PIPELINE

A newsletter about protecting public health and the environment

FORMALDEHYDE • FATS • OILS • GREASE • DIOXIN  
OVERFLOWS • MERCURY • "FLUSHABLE" WIPES  
PHARMACEUTICALS • PCBs • DIOXIN • CARBON  
MONOXIDE • BENZENE • FORMALDEHYDE • FATS  
OILS • GREASE • SMOKE • MERCURY • "FLUSH-  
ABLE" WIPES • PHARMACEUTICALS • PCBs • GREASE  
CARBON MONOXIDE • BENZENE • FORMALDEHYDE  
FATS • OILS • GREASE • OVERFLOWS • MERCURY • PCBs  
"FLUSHABLE" WIPES • PHARMACEUTICALS • OILS  
DIOXIN • CARBON MONOXIDE • BENZENE • SMOKE  
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MERCURY • "FLUSHABLE" WIPES • PHARMACEUTICALS  
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FORMALDEHYDE • FATS • OILS • DIOXIN • MERCURY

**SPOTLIGHT ON: POLLUTANTS**



# UP IN SMOKE

## Burning = Air *and* Water Pollution

**D**id you know that burning wood, wrapping paper, and trash creates smoke full of carbon monoxide, benzene, formaldehyde, and dioxin?

### What Goes Up Must Come Down

These toxins not only pollute our air, they also pollute our water when the tiny particles within smoke eventually settle into streams, rivers, lakes, and bays.

Dioxin (a byproduct of incineration) is of particular concern because it has been characterized by the Environmental Protection Agency as a likely human carcinogen that increases the risk of cancer.

### Decreasing Dioxin's Danger

Here are six ways you can help to reduce dioxin, and other pollutants, in the environment:

- ▶ 1. Do not burn wrapping paper, painted wood, particle board, plastics, Styrofoam or other trash.
- ▶ 2. Switch from a wood-burning fireplace to a natural gas device, an EPA-certified wood stove, or a pellet stove to reduce emissions.
- ▶ 3. Burn manufactured logs instead of wood in your fireplace. They burn cleaner, with lower emissions of dioxin and other pollutants. **Note:** Follow instructions on the logs; some are not suitable for wood stoves or fireplace inserts.
- ▶ 4. If you burn wood, make sure it is completely dry. Wet wood burns less efficiently and causes more pollution.
- ▶ 5. Keep your fireplace or stove well maintained to improve air flow and reduce emissions.
- ▶ 6. While a crackling fire can be cheery during the holidays, always check for Spare the Air alerts. You could be fined for burning on a Spare the Air day.



# Season's Greasings!

**A**h, the holiday season: festive gatherings with family and friends, fancy feasts, and lots of grease!

During this time of year when people prepare elaborate meals, deep-fry turkeys, and invite hordes of family and friends into their homes and kitchens, the amount of grease, oil and fat going down sinks and into the sewer system triples. No wonder it's the busiest time of year for plumbers!

## Grease is a major cause of sewer clogs and overflows.

We're sure *YOU* know better than to put grease or fat-laden scraps down your drain, but what about that eager helpful friend volunteering to do the dishes?

When cooking byproducts go down your sink (even when using a dishwasher or garbage disposal), greasy stuff can cling to the inside of the sewer pipe and accumulate over time. Eventually the pipe can become completely clogged, causing sewage to back up and overflow inside your home, in your yard, or in the street.

## Here's how you can prevent such a mess from ruining your holidays (make sure well-meaning helpers know this, too):

- Keep all grease, oil, fats and fatty foods out of the sink and garbage disposal.
- If you soak greasy items in soapy water before washing them, place a paper towel over the drain to catch grease and food particles as you pour out the water.
- Put small amounts of grease, oil and fats in a lidded container; freeze it or mix in an absorbent material (such as coffee grounds or kitty litter); put it in the trash.
- Bring large quantities of grease and used cooking oil (such as from a turkey fryer) to our Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility for recycling into biofuels.



## Do You Need an Overflow Protection Device?

**T**hanks to the diligent efforts of our crews, Central San has one of the lowest sewer overflow rates in California. But with 1,500 miles of sewers serving more than 470,000 customers, we can never totally eliminate overflows; there are too many things beyond our control.

### Stuff happens. But it needn't happen to you.

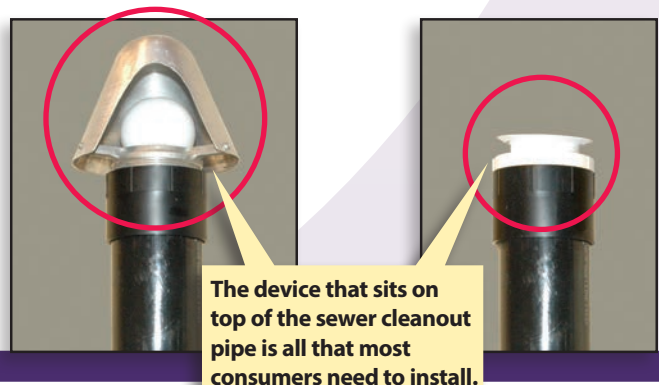
Installing an Overflow Protection Device on the cleanout of your home's private side-sewer/lateral will prevent sewage from backing up into your home from a clogged sewer main in the street. The device causes the sewage to overflow into your yard, rather than through drains inside your home.

**Note:** *The device will not help if a clog occurs between it and the house drains, so keep your pipe free of grease, disposable wipes, and anything else that might cause a clog!*

Overflow Protection Devices are available at plumbing supply stores. We recommend installation by a licensed plumber.

Be sure to keep the device clear of obstructions that might interfere with its operation, such as dirt or vegetation.

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





# Shedding Light on Toxins In Fluorescents

**F**luorescent lights (bulbs, tubes, lamps) contain small amounts of mercury, one of the most toxic pollutants in Bay Area waters.

Old ballasts (the electrical component of fluorescent light fixtures) can contain small amounts of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), highly toxic synthetic chemicals that were banned in 1978.

Keep this in mind when changing out your light fixtures: If fluorescent lights or ballasts are improperly disposed of, mercury and PCBs can leach into groundwater or surface waters and cause serious risks to public health and the environment.

*The best way to safely dispose of fluorescent lights and ballasts is to bring them to the Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection Facility.*

- For fluorescent lights, use their original packaging, if possible. Otherwise, wrap them in newspaper to keep them from breaking. Secure them in your trunk or truck bed to avoid broken glass or mercury exposure in case of an

*Continued on next page* ►



## 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*

**Holiday Closures:** Dec. 24 through Jan. 1.

**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.

► *Continued from page 8*

accident. Please do not tape tubes together, as they will need to be loose to be recycled.

● Ballasts that do not contain PCBs are marked “No PCBs” on their labels. If a ballast is not so marked, assume it contains PCBs and bring it to the facility for proper disposal. Remove the ballast from the light fixture prior to delivery to the facility. If the ballast is leaking, put it in a sealable plastic bag, and place all cleanup materials (rags, wipes, etc.) into the bag with it.

### **Fluorescents Are Still A Good Choice; LEDs are Even Better**

Fluorescent lights are still a good environmental and economic choice because they are significantly more energy efficient than incandescent lamps and last up to ten times longer. Reducing energy usage cuts down on power plant emissions of mercury and other pollutants.

Better yet, use LED (Light Emitting Diode) lights. LED lights are even more energy efficient, do not contain mercury or other hazardous materials, and can be put in the trash when no longer needed.

Please call 1-800-646-1431 for more information about proper disposal of fluorescent lights, ballasts, and other household hazardous wastes.

**Fascinating Fact:** Last year, our HHW Collection Facility received 279,200 feet of fluorescent lamps. Laid end-to-end, they'd reach from Martinez to North San Jose (about 53 miles)!

## **Protect Water Quality: DO NOT Flush Your Drugs!**

Please do not flush medications down the toilet. They often contain chemicals that cannot be completely removed by our treatment process and could pollute the Bay. Protect your family, your community, and the environment by bringing unwanted or expired medications to a free drop-off site for safe disposal:

- ▶ **Alamo Sheriff's Substation**  
150 Alamo Plaza, Suite C
- ▶ **Clayton Police Dept.**  
6000 Heritage Trail
- ▶ **Concord Police Dept.**  
1350 Galindo St.
- ▶ **Danville Police Dept.**  
510 La Gonda Way
- ▶ **Lafayette Police Dept.**  
3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd.,  
Suite 130
- ▶ **Martinez:**
  - **Police Dept.**  
525 Henrietta St.
  - **Sheriff's Field Ops Bldg.**  
1980 Muir Rd.
  - **Contra Costa Med. Center  
Sheriff's Substation**  
2500 Alhambra Ave.
- ▶ **Moraga Police Dept.**  
329 Rheem Blvd.
- ▶ **Orinda Police Dept.**  
22 Orinda Way
- ▶ **Pleasant Hill Police Dept.**  
330 Civic Dr.
- ▶ **San Ramon Police Dept.**  
2401 Crow Canyon Rd.
- ▶ **Walnut Creek City Hall**  
1666 North Main St.

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

**Do not put sharps or anything other than medications in the container!**

For more information, visit [www.centraisan.org/hhw](http://www.centraisan.org/hhw) or call 1-800-646-1431.



# Central San Helps Napa After Quake

You saw the news coverage showing downtown Napa after the August 24 earthquake: the teetering buildings, fallen bricks, burned mobile homes, collapsed streets.

That catastrophic damage was clearly visible. What had happened under the streets was not.

On the morning following the quake, our General Manager, Roger Bailey, reached out to the Napa Sanitation District (Napa San) to ask if they needed help. They did, and requested our assistance with determining the extent of damage to their sewer system after the earthquake.

Before dawn the next day, a Central San closed-circuit TV truck, crew, and supervisor were on the way to Napa.

“Our crew was in Napa for three days, working 12-13 hours each day to get the work done as quickly as possible,” said Paul Seitz, our Collection System Operations Division Manager.

“They didn’t work in the downtown areas where there was major damage,” said Paul. “Napa San knew water and sewer pipes had broken when roads collapsed, but their own crews handled those areas.”

Central San’s crew did video inspections of old pipes that had already been slated for



replacement and were possibly more susceptible to damage from the earthquake. Napa wanted to make sure those pipes could continue to function until their scheduled replacement time. Our crew lowered a special sewer camera into the sewer which allowed them to view and record the condition of the pipes.

“They didn’t find any damage from the earthquake,” said Paul. “We let Napa know about a few blockages caused by normal issues such as roots and grease, and furnished them with reports and video footage so they could prioritize their cleaning and repair work.”

Central San and Napa San are both members of the California Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (CalWARN).

“CalWARN facilitates mutual aid,” said Paul. “When a state of emergency is declared, there’s already an agreement in place for members to offer assistance to each other. You can respond quickly and provide assistance, then get reimbursed for the work.”

That doesn’t mean we only help other agencies when a formal agreement, or state of emergency, exists.

“We frequently help other agencies,” said Paul, “and they help us. The sewer business is a tight-knit community, and we often work together to ensure the best service for our customers.”



# Free Recycled Water for Residential Use

Central San is now offering free recycled water to its residential customers, as California experiences its third driest year on record. The recycled water can be used to hand-water lawns, gardens and landscaping to help save drinking water supplies.

▶ ***It is not safe for drinking, and should not be allowed to run off into storm drains.***

*Eligible communities include Alamo, Blackhawk, Clayton, Concord, Clyde, Danville, Lafayette, Martinez, Moraga, Orinda, Pacheco, Pleasant Hill, San Ramon, Walnut Creek, and other Central County unincorporated areas within the Central Contra Costa Sanitary District service area.*

Central San produces approximately 600 million gallons of recycled water each year.

“Recycled water is a valuable resource, especially during this extreme drought,” said Roger Bailey, the District’s General Manager. “We’ve been providing recycled water for several years to commercial customers with large irrigation needs, such as parks, school ball fields, and golf courses. And now we are excited to follow in the footsteps of the Dublin San Ramon Services District, which was the first agency in the state to provide free recycled water to residential customers.”

For more information about the residential recycled water fill station, please call 1-800-646-1431.



*Our new recycled water fill station.*

## How to Get Recycled Water

▶ **The fill station is at our Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility (HHWCF), 4797 Imhoff Place, Martinez, and is open Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.**

▶ Prior to using the fill station for the first time, you must fill out a Residential Recycled Water Use Application/ Agreement and receive training on the proper use of recycled water. Blank forms can be

downloaded from [www.centrialsan.org/recycledwater](http://www.centrialsan.org/recycledwater) or obtained at the HHWCF. We encourage you to complete the form before your first visit.

▶ Bring your own containers, minimum size one gallon, which must have water-tight lids and be secured for safe transport.

▶ The maximum fill per trip is 300 gallons. There is no limit on number of trips.

▶ And, don’t forget...**water is heavy!** Ten gallons weigh more than 80 pounds; 100 gallons weigh more than 800 pounds. When driving vehicles with such heavy loads, be sure to allow for additional stopping distance.





# What's In YOUR Wall Thermostat?

Replacing an old thermostat with a new programmable model can trim more than \$100 a year from your energy bill by automatically reducing your heating or cooling when you need it least. But disposing of an old thermostat requires special care, because it could contain one of the most widespread, persistent, and toxic contaminants in our environment: **Mercury**.

## Does Your Thermostat Contain Mercury?

Most thermostats sold before 2006 contain a mercury switch (sometimes two), which consists of a glass ampoule with mercury inside. If your thermostat has a dial or a lever, chances are it contains mercury.

Typical mercury thermostats contain from three to twelve grams of mercury. By comparison, a mercury fever thermometer contains only one gram. California has banned the sale of both mercury thermostats and mercury fever thermometers.

## Is It Safe?

In normal use, mercury-containing thermostats are safe. They are designed with a sturdy casing to hold and protect the sealed glass ampoule of mercury.

But because they could break during disposal, it is illegal to put mercury thermostats in the trash. When a mercury-containing device is disposed of in a landfill or incinerator, the mercury can escape to contaminate air, soil, surface water and groundwater.

## How to Recycle Mercury-Containing Thermostats

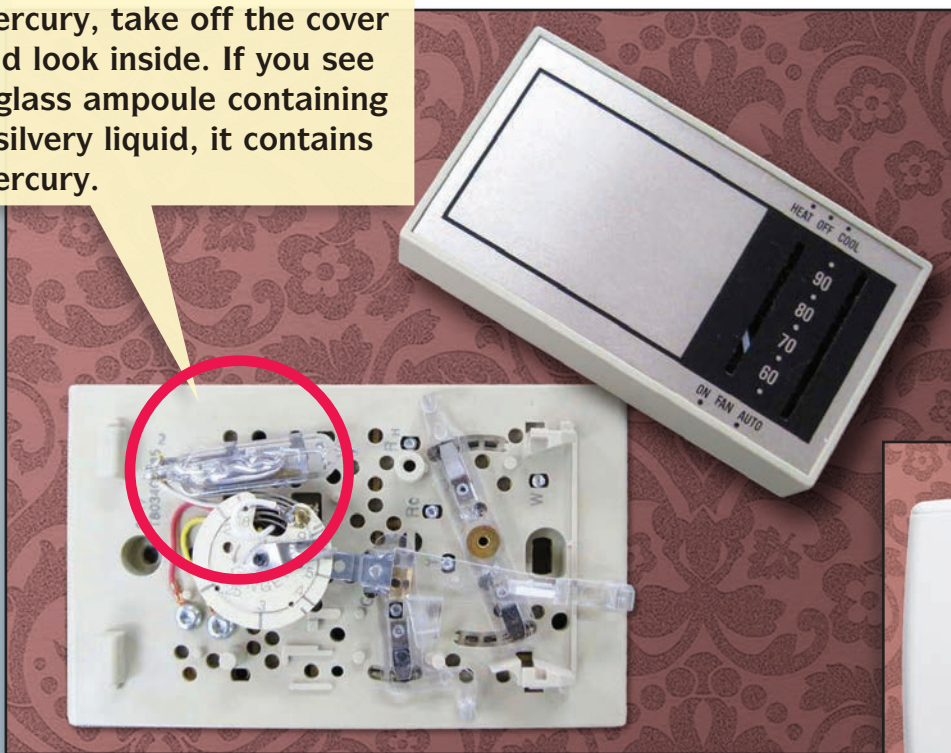
If you decide to replace a mercury-containing thermostat, California law requires that it be

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If you're not sure whether your thermostat contains mercury, take off the cover and look inside. If you see a glass ampoule containing a silvery liquid, it contains mercury.

*The proper disposal of mercury-containing thermostats prevents pollution and protects the environment.*

Digital thermostats are mercury-free.





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recycled rather than put in the trash.

- Handle the thermostat carefully during removal from the wall. Place it in a sealable plastic bag in case it breaks during transport.
- Never remove the glass ampoule of mercury from the thermostat housing. Keeping the ampoule in the housing protects it from easily breaking.
- Bring the intact thermostat to our Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility in Martinez. The mercury from your thermostat will be safely recycled. There is no fee.

### Questions?

For more information about the safe disposal of mercury-containing thermostats or other forms of household hazardous waste, please call 1-800-646-1431 or go to our website, [centralsan.org/HHW](http://centralsan.org/HHW).

### Need a Guest Speaker?

Would your group like to hear about Central San and our water pollution prevention efforts? Call (925) 335-7702 and leave a message about your event. We'll do our best to provide a speaker free of charge.



### Treatment Plant Tours

We offer free tours for groups of five or more people, grade 6 and up, who would like to see how Central San's award-winning treatment plant makes wastewater safe for the environment. Call Kit Ohlman at (925) 229-7329 for more information.



*Wipes clog pipes, and even those labeled as “flushable” can cause sewer clogs and backups. Put wipes and paper towels in the trash, not the toilet.*

## Why “Flushable” Products Should NOT be Flushed

**D**uring cold and flu season, which unfortunately coincides with the holiday season, you may be doing a lot of cleaning and disinfecting in your home. Many products designed to clean and disinfect are disposable wipes. Some are even labeled as “flushable.”

But that term simply means they will go down your toilet when flushed.

What you should be concerned about is what can happen **after** they are flushed.

Unlike toilet paper, most disposable wipes (even those labeled as “flushable”) do not quickly disintegrate in water. They stay intact as they travel through the sewer pipes and can easily get caught on tree roots and other debris, increasing the risk of clogs.

As these products have exploded in popularity, our crews have been spending a lot of time and resources to remove them from sewers, pumps, and treatment plant equipment.

Please throw away disinfecting wipes, baby wipes, moist towelettes, personal hygiene products – all forms of disposable or “flushable” products – in the trash, never in your toilet. **And never flush paper towels, either!**

***Flush only human waste and toilet paper.***



# Infrastructure Improvements

The Central Contra Costa Sanitary District regularly maintains, repairs or replaces sewer lines and other elements of our 1,500-mile wastewater collection system to decrease the likelihood of failures and to ensure continuous, trouble-free service for our customers. Our projects may cause short-term inconveniences, but they provide long-term benefits for you and your neighbors. We appreciate your understanding. Here's a brief summary of our major ongoing construction projects:

## **Martinez, Orinda, Moraga, Danville, San Ramon**

The **Cathodic Protection Project, Phase 1**, is adding/modifying corrosion protection and testing systems on sewer lines and at pumping stations throughout the District. Expected completion: May 2015.

## **Lafayette**

The **Lafayette Sewer Renovation Project, Phase 9**, is renovating sewers in the St. Mary's Road and Moraga Blvd. areas. Expected completion: October 2015.

## **Martinez**

The **Martinez Sewer Renovation Project, Phase 4**, is renovating sewers in the G Street and Brookside Drive areas. Expected completion: May 2016.

## **Orinda**

In partnership with the City of Orinda's North Lane Stormwater Mitigation Project, the District will be renovating sewers along North Lane.

## **Walnut Creek**

The **Walnut Creek Sewer Renovation Project, Phase 10**, is renovating sewers in the Walnut Boulevard and Summit Road areas. Expected completion: March 2015.

### **For more info...**

*For more information about these or other construction projects, please contact Community Affairs Representative Chris Carpenter at (925) 229-7200 or [ccarp@centralsan.org](mailto:ccarp@centralsan.org), or visit [www.centralsan.org/construction](http://www.centralsan.org/construction).*

### **ONLINE:**

Detailed project maps are posted on our website, [www.centralsan.org](http://www.centralsan.org) (check the "Construction Zone" on the right of the home page).



## **Want to Be (Gasp!) Removed From Our Mailing List?**

**Could you please recycle this newsletter instead?**

**Here's why:**

**1** We are required by the Regional Water Quality Control Board to provide pollution prevention outreach to everyone in our service area. Since we do not send out bills, this newsletter is the most economical way for us to fulfill our regulatory requirement.

**2** It is significantly less expensive for us to send the newsletter at a discounted "presorted" rate to all addresses in our service area, than to send it to individuals and maintain an ever-changing mailing list.

**3** We send the newsletter to 156,500 addresses. We minimize printing costs with an annual contract specifying that number of copies for each issue. Your unsubscribing would not reduce the number of newsletters we print; it would not conserve paper or other resources; it would not save money.

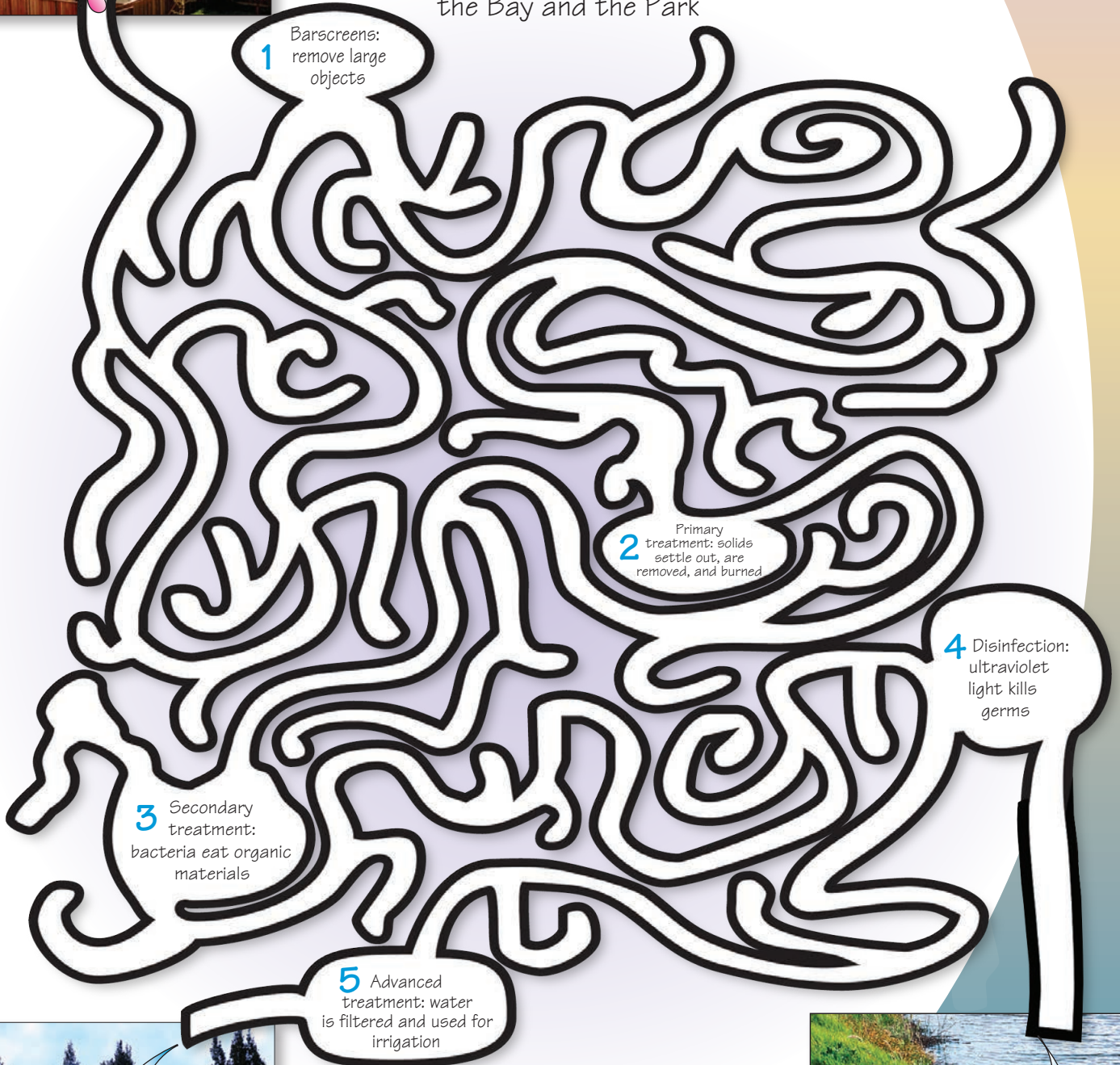
That's why recycling this newsletter is the best option.

We'll never send you more than three issues per year. We're sorry if this causes you any inconvenience, and thank you for your understanding and cooperation.





Trace the path of water from the house, through the treatment plant, and out to the Bay and the Park



1 Barscreens: remove large objects

2 Primary treatment: solids settle out, are removed, and burned

3 Secondary treatment: bacteria eat organic materials

4 Disinfection: ultraviolet light kills germs

5 Advanced treatment: water is filtered and used for irrigation



Did you know the Central San treatment plant cleans 45 million gallons of wastewater each day?



## 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 12 collection sites for the safe disposal of pharmaceuticals.

## Where to Call...

General information	(925) 228-9500 or <a href="http://www.centralsan.org">www.centralsan.org</a>
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 <a href="http://www.centralsan.org">www.centralsan.org</a>
Student Education Programs	(925) 229-7310 or <a href="http://www.centralsan.org">www.centralsan.org</a>
Public InfoLine	(925) 335-7702 or <a href="http://www.centralsan.org">www.centralsan.org</a>

### Board of Directors

**David R. Williams**, President

**Michael R. McGill**, President Pro Tem • **Paul H. Causey**, Director

**James A. Nejedly**, Director • **Tad J. Pilecki**, 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.

**Roger S. Bailey**, General Manager



**CCCSD serves 471,000 customers within its 144-square-mile service area.**

- Wastewater collection & treatment; Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) disposal for 335,000 people.
- Wastewater treatment and HHW disposal for 136,000 people in Concord and Clayton by contract.
- HHW disposal only.
- CCCSD's headquarters, treatment plant, and HHW Collection Facility are located in Martinez.

### The Central Contra Costa Sanitary District PIPELINE

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

**Bonnie Lowe**, Editor, Writer  
**Charles Waltmire**, Graphic Designer

View archived issues online at [www.centralsan.org](http://www.centralsan.org)

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