



Points of Interest

- Sewer Laterals
- 2008 District Awards
- Vallejo Watershed Alliance
- Tip of the Season

**Sewer block or overflow?
Call us first at 644-8949**

SAVE MONEY (AND THE BAY) BY MAINTAINING YOUR SEWER LATERAL

Most of us flush the toilet, or wash dishes and laundry, and never think about where the water goes after it leaves our sight. Here's why we should care:

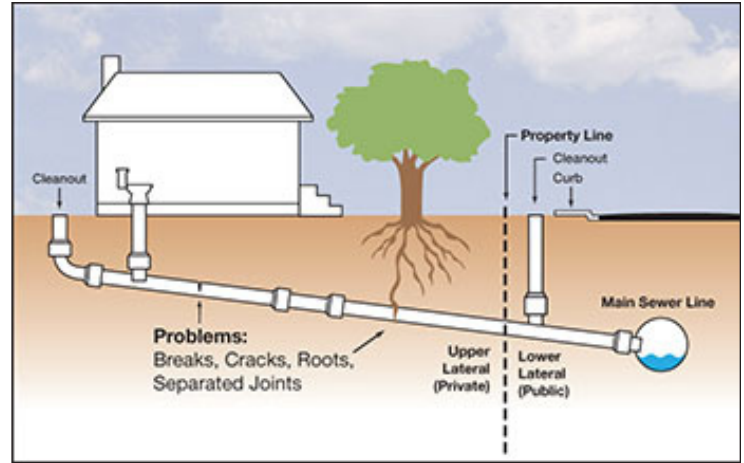
All the pipes in your house that carry wastewater from toilets, sinks, dish-washers and washing machines come together into a single pipe, called a *lateral*, that runs from your house to a larger pipe, called a *sewer main*, under the street.

Most homes have a *cleanout*, a pipe that connects your sewer line to the surface of the ground, that helps prevent overflows inside homes.

The lateral is divided into two segments. The upper private segment extends from the house to the cleanout at the curb, also called a *District cleanout*, and the lower public segment extends from there to the sewer main.

As a homeowner, you are responsible for maintaining the upper lateral. Vallejo Sanitation maintains the lower laterals. If there is no District cleanout, the homeowner is responsible for the lateral from the home to the sewer main.

In Vallejo, many homes still have their original sewer lateral connection.



The pipes are old, often made of clay with cement mortar joints. Over time, some have cracked or have separated joints, and sometimes the pipes have shifted out of place. These defects allow tree roots to grow into the pipes, which cause blockages.

Other causes of blockages include cooking oil and grease, the wrong things being put down the drain, and more. When pipes are blocked, overflows occur.

If you have a cleanout on your property, and a blockage occurs in your lateral, the overflow will occur outside your home. This may cause damage to your yard, your neighbor's property, and, if the overflow reaches the storm drain, may harm the Bay.

If you don't have a cleanout and a blockage occurs, wastewater will back up into your house causing potential health and property problems.

If you have an overflow or stoppage, call us first. We'll evaluate the problem. If it is District-related, we'll fix it. If the problem is in the upper lateral, you'll be advised to call a plumber.

(continued)

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SEWER LATERALS (FROM PAGE 1)

Two important notes:

If you don't address the problem, there are risks involved. You may be subject to fines for allowing wastewater to harm the environment through the storm drain, or you may be open to litigation from your neighbors for property damage.

Fortunately, there's a good solution. The

District has an Upper Lateral Program that can reimburse part of the cost of upper lateral replacement or cleanout installation. You must apply for the reimbursement *before* you do the work—you can't bring your receipts to the District afterwards for reimbursement.

For information about the Upper Lateral

Program, visit our website at VSFCd.com. On the left menu click Forms, then Upper Lateral Program. The form (and the instructions for filling it out) are there.

Remember, keeping your upper lateral in good shape is better for the environment, and may save you thousands of dollars.



Tip of the Season: Mulch!

January is the perfect month to mulch your gardens. Putting down mulch protects the roots and crowns of perennials from cold weather.

Exposed roots dry out or freeze, killing the plants. Organic mulches will break down over winter, adding organic matter that will feed the soil and improve soil structure.

Healthy soils mean less use of pesticides, which is great for protecting our waterways. Mulch also keeps moisture in the soils, so you don't need as much water to keep your plants alive.



Currents is produced bimonthly by the Vallejo Sanitation & Flood Control District. For more information, visit www.vsfcd.com or call (707) 644-8949.

RECENT SEWER LINE UPGRADES

Sewer line upgrade work is now complete on Gary Circle, Raines Ct., Plov Way, Manzanita

Drive, Springs Road, Magazine and Pine Streets, Vallejo Middle School and the east

shore of Lake Dalwygk.

Improvements on other sites will begin in the spring.

VALLEJO WATERSHED ALLIANCE



If your New Year's resolutions include helping the environment, the Alliance is a great place to start.

The Alliance is made up of interested residents, local groups and agencies.

They have been working with volunteers in Hanns Park and other watersheds to restore habitat. Visit www.VallejoWatershedAlliance.org or call 644-8949 ext. 292 for info.

PLANT OF THE YEAR

The District is honored to be selected as the 2008 Plant of the Year by the Redwood Empire Section of the California Water Environment Association for the third year in a row. This award recognizes outstanding achievements in the wastewater field. To be awarded Plant of the Year, a treatment plant needs to show superior plant operations, excellence in management and staff development, innovative practices, cost effectiveness, energy conservation, and a strong commitment to public education and safety. This year, the District was also honored with the award for Public Education Program of the Year and Public Education Person of the Year.

