Sewage Spill Regulatory Requirements

Allowing sewage to discharge to a gutter or storm drain may subject you to penalties and/or out-of-pocket costs to reimburse cities or public agencies for clean-up efforts.

Here are the pertinent codes, fines, and agency contact information that apply.

Orange County Stormwater Program

24 Hour Water Pollution Reporting Hotline
1-877-89-SPILL (1-877-897-7455)

- County and city water quality ordinances prohibit discharges containing pollutants.

Orange County Health Care Agency Environmental Health

(714) 433-6419

California Health and Safety Code, Sections 5410-5416

- No person shall discharge raw or treated sewage or other waste in a manner that results in contamination, pollution or a nuisance.
- Any person who causes or permits a sewage discharge to any state waters:
  - must immediately notify the local health agency of the discharge.
  - shall reimburse the local health agency for services that protect the public's health and safety (water-contact receiving waters).
  - who fails to provide the required notice to the local health agency is guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punished by a fine (between $500–$1,000) and/or imprisonment for less than one year.

Regional Water Quality Control Board

Santa Ana Region (951) 782-4130
San Diego Region (858) 467-2952

- Requires the prevention, mitigation, response to and reporting of sewage spills.

California Office of Emergency Services

(800) 852-7550

California Water Code, Article 4, Chapter 4, Sections 13268-13271
California Code of Regulations, Title 23, Division 3, Chapter 9.2, Article 2, Sections 2250-2260

- Any person who causes or permits sewage in excess of 1,000 gallons to be discharged to state waters **shall immediately notify the Office of Emergency Services.**
- Any person who fails to provide the notice required by this section is **guilty of a misdemeanor** and shall be punished by a fine (less than $20,000) and/or imprisonment for not more than one year.

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Sewage Spill

Reference Guide

Your Responsibilities as a Private Property Owner

Residences
Businesses
Homeowner/Condominium Associations
Federal and State Complexes
Military Facilities

Orange County Sanitation District

Health Care Agency
Environmental Health

PROJECT Pollution PREVENTION
www.ocwatersheds.com

This brochure was designed courtesy of the Orange County Sanitation District (OCSD).
For additional information, call (714) 962-2411, or visit their website at www.ocsd.com

What is a Sewage Spill?

Sewage spills occur when the wastewater being transported via underground pipes overflows through a manhole, cleanout or broken pipe. Sewage spills can cause health hazards, damage to homes and businesses, and threaten the environment, local waterways and beaches.

Common Causes of Sewage Spills

Grease builds up inside and eventually blocks sewer pipes. Grease gets into the sewer from food establishments, household drains, as well as from poorly maintained commercial grease traps and interceptors.

Structure problems caused by tree roots in the lines, broken/cracked pipes, missing or broken cleanout caps or undersized sewers can cause blockages.

Infiltration and inflow (I/I) impacts pipe capacity and is caused when groundwater or rainwater enters the sewer system through pipe defects and illegal connections.

You Are Responsible for a Sewage Spill Caused by a Blockage or Break in Your Sewer Lines!

Time is of the essence in dealing with sewage spills. You are required to **immediately**:

Control and minimize the spill. Keep spills contained on private property and out of gutters, storm drains and public waterways by shutting off or not using the water.

Use sandbags, dirt and/or plastic sheeting to prevent sewage from entering the storm drain system.

Clear the sewer blockage. Always wear gloves and wash your hands. It is recommended that a plumbing professional be called for clearing blockages and making necessary repairs.

Always notify your city sewer/public works department or public sewer district of sewage spills. If the spill enters the storm drains also notify the Health Care Agency. In addition, if it exceeds 1,000 gallons notify the Office of Emergency Services. Refer to the numbers listed in this brochure.

Overflowing cleanout pipe located on private property

You Could Be Liable

Allowing sewage from your home, business or property to discharge to a gutter or storm drain may subject you to penalties and/or out-of-pocket costs to reimburse cities or public agencies for clean-up and enforcement efforts. See Regulatory Codes & Fines section for pertinent codes and fines that apply.

What to Look For

Sewage spills can be a very noticeable gushing of water from a manhole or a slow water leak that may take time to be noticed. Don't dismiss unaccounted-for wet areas.

Look for:

- Drain backups inside the building.
- Wet ground and water leaking around manhole lids onto your street.
- Leaking water from cleanouts or outside drains.
- Unusual odorous wet areas: sidewalks, external walls or ground/landscape around a building.

Caution

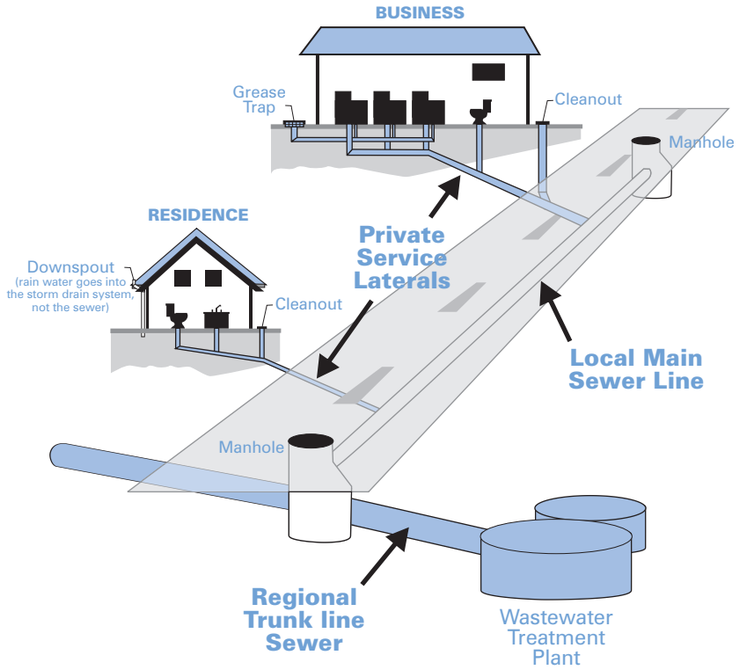
Keep people and pets away from the affected area. Untreated sewage has high levels of disease-causing viruses and bacteria. Call your local health care agency listed on the back for more information.

If You See a Sewage Spill Occurring, Notify Your City Sewer/Public Works Department or Public Sewer District IMMEDIATELY!

How a Sewer System Works

A property owner's sewer pipes are called service laterals and are connected to larger local main and regional trunk lines. Service laterals run from the connection at the home to the connection with the public sewer (including the area under the street). These laterals are the responsibility of the property owner and must be maintained by the property owner. Many city agencies have adopted ordinances requiring maintenance of service laterals. Check with your city sewer/local public works department for more information.

Operation and maintenance of **local and regional sewer lines** are the responsibility of the city sewer/public works departments and public sewer districts.



How You Can Prevent Sewage Spills

1. **Never put grease down garbage disposals, drains or toilets.**
2. **Perform periodic cleaning to eliminate grease, debris and roots in your service laterals.**
3. **Repair any structural problems in your sewer system and eliminate any rainwater infiltration/inflow leaks into your service laterals.**

Preventing Grease Blockages

The drain is not a dump! Recycle or dispose of grease properly and never pour grease down the drain.

Homeowners should mix fats, oils and grease with absorbent waste materials such as paper, coffee grounds, or kitty litter and place it in the trash. Wipe food scraps from plates and pans and dump them in the trash.

Restaurants and commercial food service establishments should always use "Kitchen Best Management Practices." These include:

- Collecting all cooking grease and liquid oil from pots, pans and fryers in covered grease containers for recycling.
- Scraping or dry-wiping excess food and grease from dishes, pots, pans and fryers into the trash.
- Installing drain screens on all kitchen drains.
- Having spill kits readily available for cleaning up spills.
- Properly maintaining grease traps or interceptors by having them serviced regularly. Check your local city codes.

Orange County Agency Responsibilites

- **City Sewer/Public Works Departments—** Responsible for protecting city property and streets, the local storm drain system, sewage collection system and other public areas.
- **Public Sewer/Sanitation District—** Responsible for collecting, treating and disposing of wastewater.
- **County of Orange Health Care Agency—** Responsible for protecting public health by closing ocean/bay waters and may close food-service businesses if a spill poses a threat to public health.
- **Regional Water Quality Control Boards—** Responsible for protecting State waters.
- **Orange County Stormwater Program—** Responsible for preventing harmful pollutants from being discharged or washed by stormwater runoff into the municipal storm drain system, creeks, bays and the ocean.

You Could Be Liable for Not Protecting the Environment

Local and state agencies have legal jurisdiction and enforcement authority to ensure that sewage spills are remedied.

They may respond and assist with containment, relieving pipe blockages, and/or clean-up of the sewage spill, especially if the spill is flowing into storm drains or onto public property.

A property owner may be charged for costs incurred by these agencies responding to spills from private properties.

Report Sewage Spills!

City Sewer/Public Works Departments

Aliso Viejo	(949) 425-2500
Anaheim	(714) 765-6860
Brea	(714) 990-7691
Buena Park	(714) 562-3655
Costa Mesa	(949) 645-8400
Cypress	(714) 229-6760
Dana Point	(949) 248-3562
Fountain Valley	(714) 593-4600
Fullerton	(714) 738-6897
Garden Grove	(714) 741-5375
Huntington Beach	(714) 536-5921
Irvine	(949) 453-5300
Laguna Beach	(949) 497-0765
Laguna Hills	(949) 707-2650
Laguna Niguel	(949) 362-4337
Laguna Woods	(949) 639-0500
La Habra	(562) 905-9792
Lake Forest	(949) 461-3480
La Palma	(714) 690-3310
Los Alamitos	(562) 431-3538
Mission Viejo	(949) 831-2500
Newport Beach	(949) 644-3011
Orange	(714) 532-6480
Orange County	(714) 567-6363
Placentia	(714) 993-8245
Rancho Santa Margarita	(949) 635-1800
San Clemente	(949) 366-1553
San Juan Capistrano	(949) 443-6363
Santa Ana	(714) 647-3380
Seal Beach	(562) 431-2527
Stanton	(714) 379-9222
Tustin	(714) 962-2411
Villa Park	(714) 998-1500
Westminster	(714) 893-3553
Yorba Linda	(714) 961-7170

Public Sewer/Water Districts

Costa Mesa Sanitary District	(714) 393-4433/ (949) 645-8400
El Toro Water District	(949) 837-0660
Emerald Bay Service District	(949) 494-8571
Garden Grove Sanitary District	(714) 741-5375
Irvine Ranch Water District	(949) 453-5300
Los Alamitos/Rossmoor Sewer District	(562) 431-2223
Midway City Sanitary District (Westminster)	(714) 893-3553
Moulton Niguel Water District	(949) 831-2500
Orange County Sanitation District	(714) 962-2411
Santa Margarita Water District	(949) 459-6420
South Coast Water District	(949) 499-4555
South Orange County Wastewater Authority	(949) 234-5400
Sunset Beach Sanitary District	(562) 493-9932
Trabuco Canyon Sanitary District	(949) 858-0277
Yorba Linda Water District	(714) 777-3018

Other Agencies

Orange County Health Care Agency	(714) 433-6419
Office of Emergency Services	(800) 852-7550