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

Currents

TOP 5 THINGS YOU CAN DO FOR THE BAY

Having trouble with New Year's resolutions? Here are some ideas that don't involve a treadmill or fewer trips to the fridge.

While 2007 will go down in local history as the year a cargo ship spilled 58,000 gallons of oil into the Bay, it's important to remember that individuals have a key role to play in helping the environment. This is a great time to make small positive changes to help the Bay and ourselves.

The Bay Area Clean Water Agencies and the Bay Area Stormwater Management Agencies Association have put together a list of helpful actions for the Bay in 2008. If Bay Area residents do these simple actions regularly in the new year, it will definitely make a difference.

#1. Pick up one piece of litter every day—there's plenty out there. Litter left on streets can flow through storm drains to the Bay.

#2. Get back to basics! Instead of buying water in plastic bottles, try running your own tap and filling a reusable bottle, such as stainless steel or glass. Use regular, not antibacterial, soap for hand washing. Avoid soap



products with the active ingredient *triclosan*, a registered pesticide that accumulates in the bodies of fish and humans and can be toxic to water organisms.

#3. Go all the way with compact fluorescent light bulbs. Reduce your energy consumption by using compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) or Light-Emitting Diodes (LEDs). Remember that CFLs contain some mercury. When your CFLs finally give out, dispose of them properly so that mercury doesn't find its way into the Bay. Take them to the Vallejo-Napa Household Hazardous Waste Facility. For hours and directions, call 800-984-9661.

#4. Get rid of your fat the right way—cooking fat, that is. Don't pour cooking byproducts

like fats, oils and grease down sinks where they clog pipes. Take them to Vallejo Garbage Service at 2021 Broadway in Vallejo. For hours and directions, call 552-3110.

#5. Oil and water don't mix. Our Bay has been through a lot this year. Please do your part by keeping your car maintained. Each year in the U.S. an estimated 180 million gallons of used oil are disposed of improperly: dripped, spilled or poured onto the ground, directly into waterways, or down storm drains. Oil from leaky vehicles can have a real impact: one quart of motor oil can pollute up to 250,000 gallons of water. If you change your own oil, recycle the used oil when you're done.

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CONSUMER ALERT: PLUMBING REPAIR

Vallejo Sanitation & Flood Control District recently issued a Consumer Alert to warn residents about unscrupulous plumbers who try to overcharge customers.

“We want to make sure that innocent people are not paying far more than the going rate for plumbing services,” says District Manager Ron Matheson.

Customer calls to the District’s Engineering Department alerted officials that some customers have been significantly overcharged for relatively simple plumbing repairs.

Stories of recent overcharging include Vallejo residents that have paid two or three times what the market rate is for a repair, and businesses paying several thousand more than necessary for larger jobs.

The District strongly recommends getting two or three bids from licensed plumbers prior to signing a contract.

“It’s very sad to hear stories of plumbers taking advantage of customers,” Matheson says. “Senior citizens are particularly vulnerable. If there is a plumbing emergency that needs to be addressed, often folks will go with the first plumber who comes to their home. The problem is that the market rate for the repair might be \$2,500, but a plumber might first bid \$8,000 for the job and offer to knock \$1,000 off the price if the customer signs the contract that day. So the customer thinks that they’re saving money, but they might be paying three times what the repair should cost.”

What You Can Do

Before you sign the contract, get two or three bids from licensed plumbers. Vallejo Sanitation & Flood Control District has a reimbursement program for residential

upper laterals. Call or visit the District office before you sign a contract for the work.

If the repair meets the District criteria, we may reimburse you for part or all of the repair.

Generally, the reimbursement is about 80% of the actual cost. The District can provide you with a list of licensed plumbers who are familiar with the reimbursement program. *You must sign up for this program prior to signing a contract with a plumber.*

After the repair: If you feel that you’ve been overcharged or treated unethically, the Calif. Dept. of Consumer Affairs strongly recommends that you file a complaint with the plumber’s contracting board either online at www.dca.ca.gov or by calling 1-800-321-2752.



Tip of the Season

How yucky is this picture? What you are seeing are rags, feminine products, mop pads, household wipes and a myriad of other items that are flushed down toilets instead of being put in the trash where they belong.

As well as clogging up pumps and pipes at the Sanitation District, flushing things that aren’t meant to be flushed can result in sewer backups in your home. This can get very expensive.

*Look at it this way: the **only** things that should be flushed down the toilet are A) human body waste, and B) toilet paper.*

That’s it.

Everything else should be recycled or go into the trash.



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

