



### Points of Interest

- Prevent Clogged Drains
- Flood Prevention
- Keep Mosquitoes Away
- Tip of the Season

Volume 5 Issue 6  
November/December 2009

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

VALLEJO SANITATION & FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT

# Currents

## KEEP FOOD SCRAPS OUT OF THE SINK

Most sewer overflows in Vallejo residences are caused by too much cooking grease heading into the sink instead of the trash.

Sewer overflows caused by grease backups can create health hazards, damage homes, and harm the environment. Grease gets into sewer pipes from household drains as well as from poorly maintained grease traps in restaurants and other businesses.

Most often, grease that comes from home cooking gets washed into the plumbing system through the kitchen sink. Over time, grease can build up and block the entire pipe.

**Home garbage disposals do not keep grease out of the plumbing system.**

These units only shred solid material into smaller pieces, and do not prevent grease from going down the drains.

Commercial additives, including detergents, that claim to dissolve grease may instead push grease down the line and

cause backups in other areas.

Do not pour grease down drains or garbage disposals. Scrape plates into the trash before washing or loading into the dishwasher.

Wipe out small amounts of grease in pans with a paper towel prior to washing. Put baskets or strainers in sink drains to catch food scraps and other solids, and empty them into the trash.

If you have a large amount of grease left over from deep frying, you can recycle it.

Simply bring it to Vallejo Garbage Service at 2021 Broadway in Vallejo. Hours are Thursday through Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

No appointment is necessary, but they are closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. For more info, call 552-3110.

The easiest way to solve the grease problem, prevent sewer overflows, and protect your local waterways is to



keep cooking oil and grease out of the system.

For your free brochure on Fat Free Sewers, call 644-8949 ext. 292.

### District Manager

Ron Matheson

### Board of Trustees

Osby Davis

Tom Bartee

Hermie Sunga

Stephanie Gomes

Michael Wilson

Joanne Schivley

Erin Hannigan

John Silva

## KNOW YOUR FLOOD POTENTIAL

### *Did You Know?*

*A **100-year flood** is often used as a benchmark for catastrophic flooding. This magnitude of flood has a 1% chance of occurring within any given year.*

*A **floodplain** is defined by FEMA as an area prone to flooding.*

*A **flood stage water level** is the water level at which a river overflows its banks.*

*A **flood watch** means a storm is possible in your area.*

*A **flood warning** means that a flood is occurring or about to occur in your area.*

Be aware if that if you live in a low-lying area there could be a high risk of flooding. Call the Vallejo Public Works Department at 648-5229 and ask whether your property is in a flood plain and if it is above or below the flood stage water level. To help determine your flood risk, consider the elevation of your home compared to the street level.

If your home was built after the establishment of the Federal Flood Insurance Program thirty years ago, its floor elevation is most likely above the flood stage water level. If your home is older, this may not be the case. Also, if you have converted a basement or garage into a living space, it may be subject to flooding.

Homes outside of floodplains can



sometimes be in danger of flooding as well.

Residents, whether they live in a floodplain or not, should be familiar with flood prevention and preparation.

### CAN I PREVENT FLOODING?

Yes! Whether you live in urban or rural areas, taking precautionary measures can help prevent flood damage during the rainy season.

- Clean out gutter downspouts.
- Keep trash and

leaves out of street gutters to prevent clogging storm drains.

- Keep the drainage system (creeks and culverts) of your property clear of debris.

- Clear dead trees that may block a drainage system. Even during storms, it's possible to lower the potential for flooding by raking leaves that are clogging a storm drain.

### VSFCD'S FLOOD CONTROL ROLE



The District's primary role in flood control is to protect lives and property from the effects of flooding by comprehensive, coordinated flood prevention planning. The District evaluates flood

risk and implements flood control measures such as requiring new development to construct detention basins. The District:

- Implements flood control projects;
- Maintains existing flood control facilities;
- Develops and implements master plans for selected areas;
- Provides technical support and information on flood

control for the City;

- Reviews proposed development projects to see that they meet District standards.

The District also works to protect Vallejo from the threat of floods by designing and constructing channels, storm drains, dams, pump stations and other drainage related facilities.

## PREPARE YOUR HOME

You can help prevent or reduce damage caused by flooding:

- Secure motor oil, antifreeze, and household chemicals on high, enclosed shelves.
- Landscape with native plants that resist soil erosion.
- Raise your washer, dryer and other equipment in your garage above the base flood elevation. This is the elevation of a 100-year flood event.



- For the few homes with basements, install flood shields or barriers above the base flood elevation.
- For rural residents with septic systems, new septic systems should be constructed in areas that will not be impacted by floodwaters.

### On The Web

*National Weather Service*  
www.crh.noaa.gov

*The Weather Channel*  
www.weather.com

*American Red Cross*  
www.RedCross.org

*Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)*  
www.FEMA.gov

*Floodplain Management Association*  
www.floodplain.org

*Bay Area Flood Maps*  
www.abag.ca.gov/  
bayarea/eqmaps/  
eqfloods/floods

*Vallejo Sanitation & Flood Control District*  
www.VSFCD.com

## PREPARE YOUR FAMILY

- Check your homeowners or renters insurance for flood coverage—if none exists, consider purchasing it.
- Keep insurance policies, documents and other valuables in a safe-deposit box.
- Keep emergency numbers by all phones.
- Store supplies at work, home and car in handy locations: first aid kit and essential medicines, non-perishable food items, non-electric can opener, cash, portable radio, flashlights and extra batteries.
- Store drinking water in closed, clean containers in case water service is interrupted. Allow one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days.
- Know safe routes from your home or office to high, safe ground.
- Keep your car fueled.
- Keep sandbags and other emergency building materials handy for waterproofing.

## SANDBAGS



During the winter, the District makes free sandbags and sand available to Vallejo area residential customers. You may need supplies before you come, so

check our website at [www.VSFCD.com](http://www.VSFCD.com). The Sandbag Station is located at the back of the treatment plant at the west end of Solano Avenue.

### Sources

*Solano County Flood Awareness, Solano County Water Agency, Office of Emergency Services*

# KEEPING MOSQUITOES AWAY FROM YOU AND YOUR YARD



Mosquitoes are delicious food for fish, but their buzzing and itchy bites make them a great annoyance to people. Mosquitoes can also carry a variety of diseases, so controlling them, especially by eliminating breeding sites, is a priority.

The emergence of West Nile virus has focused public attention on mosquitoes. Fear may cause us to reach for a pesticide spray can, but this is an ineffective control. Pesticide sprays reach relatively few mosquitoes, and outside, they probably cause more harm to beneficial insects. Residents can have a greater effect by following some simple tips.

The young (or larvae) of mosquitoes live in

water and feed on microorganisms and organic matter. Just about any container that can hold water for more than a few days can produce a large crop of mosquitoes. Only adult female mosquitoes bite humans and other animals to feed on blood. Adult male mosquitoes feed on flower nectar.

There are many different species of mosquitoes. Some bite during the day, while others feed at night. Some mosquitoes can fly long distances from their watery breeding sites, others travel only a short distance to find their blood meals. Your bites may be coming from your own backyard.

The most effective way to control them is

to find and eliminate their breeding sites.

- Eliminate water in any container that holds water for more than a few days.
- Change water in birdbaths and pet water dishes at least once a week, better if every 2 to 3 days.
- Fix leaky outdoor faucets and sprinklers, and don't overwater your yard.
- Recycle tires or store them so they do not collect water.
- Keep roof gutters clean so water drains.
- Don't dump yard waste into street gutters or storm drains.
- Drain plastic wading pools or fountains when not in use.
- Keep swimming pools and hot tubs chlorinated and filtering.
- Use mosquitofish in backyard ponds or water gardens.

For a free fact sheet with many other helpful tips, visit [www.OurWaterOurWorld.org](http://www.OurWaterOurWorld.org) or call 644-8949 ext. 292.



## Tip of the Season

*Sometimes flooding occurs during rains because trash, leaves, grass clippings and other yard waste accumulate in storm drains.*

*Here's how you can help: Keep raking those leaves and branches out of the storm drain near your house. Put them in your yard waste bin.*

*This will allow rainwater to flow smoothly and safely through the storm drain system out to the Bay.*



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