

THE HERON

Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District

Summer 2013



Antibacterial Soaps Can Harm the Environment and Wildlife

Wastewater treatment does not entirely remove triclosan

A common ingredient that has been used for many years in antibacterial soaps and detergents is attracting the attention of consumer groups and federal regulators as its safety and effectiveness is coming into question. The compound, known as triclosan, also poses a challenge for wastewater treatment systems, which are not able to entirely remove the chemical during the treatment process.

...there is no evidence that there is any benefit to using triclosan....

Triclosan is used as an antibacterial agent in a variety of consumer products, including many antiseptic soaps. Several studies have shown that triclosan alters hormone regulation in laboratory animals and may cause bacteria to become more resistant to antibiotics, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

"Triclosan is not readily removed

during the sewage treatment process," said Mark Williams, General Manager of the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District. "Homeowners should consider alternatives to antibacterial soaps that contain triclosan."

Regulators and health officials say there is no evidence that there is any benefit to using triclosan over washing with regular soap and water. According to the American Medical Association, "Despite their recent proliferation in consumer products, the use of antibacterial agents such as triclosan in consumer products has not been studied extensively. No data exist to support their efficacy when used in such products or any need for them, but increasing data now suggest a growing acquired resistance to these commonly used antimicrobial agents."

Scientists and health officials are concerned that the overuse and misuse of antibiotics and antimicro-

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Protect Water Quality: Watch What You Flush

Your toilet is NOT a trash can

Protecting the environment and water quality of San Francisco Bay starts in your bathroom, where toilet paper is the only item you should flush down your toilet.

Water from the toilet, shower, kitchen and other sinks flows to the sanitary sewer. After treatment, most of this water eventually ends up in the Bay.

Putting anything other than toilet paper down the drains can cause sewer overflows and could severely impact your plumbing system, the District's sewer system and the treatment plant.

These common household items should be disposed of in the trash, NOT in the sink or the toilet:

- Baby wipes
- Personal (flushable) wipes
- Tampons, applicators or pads
- Bandages and sticker backs

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Awards Recognize Outstanding District Programs and Performance

The Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District prides itself on providing the highest level of service to its customers, keeping the public educated about important water issues and operating in a fiscally responsible manner. In the past few months, the District and its employees have been recognized at the local, state and national levels for their outstanding performance in these areas. These awards include:

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"Watch What You Flush" continued from page 1...

- Cleaning wipes
- Condoms and their wrappers
- Whitening strips
- Hair
- Q-tips and makeup pads
- Kitty litter
- Maxi pads and wrappers
- Dental floss

Though many of these items are touted as flushable, they can wreak havoc with your plumbing and the sewer system. In fact, Consumer Reports did a test on "flushable" wipes and found that after 30 full minutes of simulated swirling (like a toilet bowl) the wipes were still intact, whereas toilet paper typically disintegrates within a few seconds.

Prescriptions and over-the-counter medications also should not be flushed. Instead, they can be dropped off at authorized medication collection points or events.



Keep Hazardous Waste Out of the Drain

Hazardous materials that should not be flushed or poured down drains, such as paints, fertilizers and other chemicals, should be taken to a hazardous waste facility.

Household Hazardous Waste Facility

(serving all Marin County residents, except Novato)
565 Jacoby Street, San Rafael

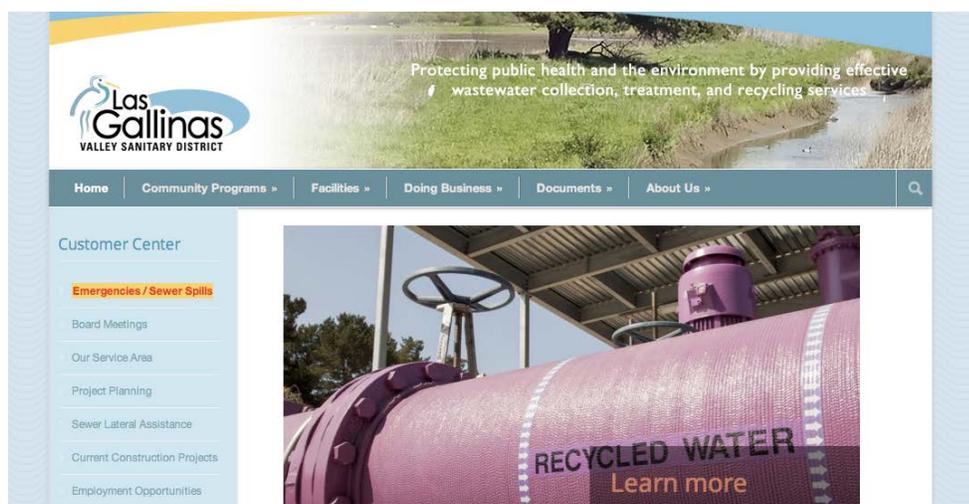
Hours:

Commercial Customers:
Monday and Tuesday by appointment

Residential Customers:
Monday-Saturday, 8:00-4:00 PM

For information about what is accepted, call:
Residential: 415-485-6806
Commercial: 415-485-5648

www.marinsanitary.com



District Redesigns Website for Easier Access

Customers can find information about hiking trails, safe disposal and protecting the environment

In an effort to improve customer service and make important information easier to access, the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District recently redesigned its website.

Customers who visit the LGVSD website – www.lgvsd.org — will find easy access to information about maintaining their sewer laterals, construction projects, and helping to keep the District's sewer collection system healthy while protecting the environment by properly disposing of common household waste and hazardous waste. There are also photos and information about

the hiking trails and bird-watching opportunities at the District's reclamation facility.

"We hope that our customers take advantage of the information and services available through the website," said General Manager Mark Williams. "It's our goal to keep District customers informed about our operations and let them know that our staff and Board of Directors are dedicated to protecting public health and the environment, and providing safe and efficient wastewater and recycling services."

"Antibacterial Soaps..." continued from page 1...

bials may lead to an increased resistance among bacteria. It may also be harmful to the immune system.

While triclosan is not known to be hazardous to humans, there is evidence that it is acutely and chronically toxic to aquatic organisms.

"Triclosan is just one of many chemicals and compounds that are difficult to completely remove during wastewater treatment and have impacts on the environment," said Williams. "As new compounds and chemicals are developed (and there are thousands of them), treatment plants have to identify

ways to remove them. If we fail to do a good job, these compounds can get into our food and water supplies."

Consumers can check product labels to find out whether products contain triclosan. If a product does contain triclosan, it will be listed on the ingredient label in the Drug Facts box. The FDA is conducting ongoing scientific and regulatory review of triclosan in the products the agency regulates.

For more information: *Triclosan: What Consumers Should Know*
<http://www.fda.gov/forconsumers/consumerupdates/ucm205999.htm>

LGVSD Will Perform Smoke Testing During Summer Months

Smoke from rooftop vents normal during testing

If you see smoke coming from rooftop vents in the Santa Venetia area this summer, it may not be cause for alarm. The Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District will be performing smoke testing in parts of the Santa Venetia area during the summer months, as well as Merrydale Road, Redwood Village and the Los Ranchitos area.

Smoke testing of wastewater collection systems is used to determine the following:

- Sources of entry to the collection system of surface waters. This includes rain, storm waters, irrigation water, etc.
- Verification that buildings are connected to a wastewater collection system.
- Location of possible illegal connections such as downspouts, yard drains, and industrial drains.
- Locations of broken sewers.

Smoke entering a building or a residence during testing does require immediate attention from the property owner, since this is an indication that gases from the sewer can and do enter the building and pose a health and safety hazard to occupants.

However, it is normal for smoke to come out of vents located on rooftops during testing. This is one indication that your home's sewer system is working properly.

Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District staff will be in the area two weeks before the actual smoke testing is conducted and will leave a door-hanger and letter at each house or building. Please be sure to read this letter so that you will not be alarmed on smoke testing day.

It is possible for smoke to enter a building if there are defects in the sewer system of the building, a defective wax ring under a toilet or dry traps in sinks, bathtubs, or showers. It's important to know that any smoke entering a building or residence reveals that gases from the sewer can and do enter the building. Prompt correction of problems by the owner is necessary for the health and safety of the occupants.

If you have any questions or concerns when smoke testing is being conducted, please step outside and speak to a member of one of our crews. They will be able to address your concerns.

LGVSD uses a smoke blower and liquid smoke to conduct the testing. The liquid smoke is produced by Hurco and is considered to be very safe. The Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for Hurco liquid smoke is available to anyone needing a copy. If you would like a copy or have any other questions, please call Janice Mandler at (415) 472-1734, ext. 13. The MSDS is also available at www.lgvsd.org.



Upgrades Maintain System Efficiency and Environmental Health

The District has made significant progress over the past ten years in upgrading the sewer system infrastructure, including major upgrades to the treatment plant, primary treatment facilities, and plant control systems. Most of the major pump stations used to convey raw sewage to the treatment plant have been upgraded and the District continues to gradually replace old sewer lines.

Despite these efforts, much work remains to be done in upgrading the treatment plant's secondary-treatment facilities in order to sustain ongoing treatment efficiency and meet future requirements. Some of plant's biological facilities are at the end of their useful life, and must be replaced. One of the plant's rock biofilters has been in continuous service for 55 years!

More stringent regulatory requirements and increased enforcement also drive the need for upgraded treatment plant and sewer system facilities. The requirements are intended to reduce the impact of wastewater collection and treatment on San Francisco Bay.

The District is proud of our excellent record in protecting public health and the environment, and recognizes that evolving public opinion and meeting new mandatory regulations demand that we continuously improve and upgrade our operations and infrastructure.

Don't Forget to Take Advantage of Our Sewer Lateral Rehabilitation Assistance Program!

Broken sewer laterals can cause pollution, which harms the environment and impacts public health. That is why Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District has established an assistance program that provides low interest advances to property owners who want to voluntarily inspect and repair their aging sewer laterals. For an application package and guidelines, please contact Susan McGuire, (415) 472-1734, info@lgvsd.org or visit www.lgvsd.org.

300 Smith Ranch Road, San Rafael, CA 94903
Phone (415) 472-1734 • Fax (415) 499-7715
www.lgvsd.org

Board of Directors

Megan Clark
Rabi Elias
Russell R. Greenfield
Craig K. Murray
Judy Schriebman

Board Meetings are

held at 4:30 PM on
the second and fourth
Thursday of each month

District Administration

Mark R. Williams, General Manager



Printed on recycled paper using soy-based inks.

"Awards..." continued from page 1...

The California Water Environment Association (CWEA) Statewide Award for Public Education, large budget category, for 2012: The District participates in a multi-agency wastewater public outreach and education program in Marin County. The program provides classroom instruction on the importance of water and water quality, participates in local fairs and the Marin County Fair to educate the public about protecting the environment through proper waste collection, treatment and disposal. This is the second time the District has won the Statewide Award for Public Education; the first time was in 2009.

The District has won the Redwood Empire Section Public Education Award four times since 2008.



Jane Rachapaetayakom, Environmental Services Specialist (left) and Nina Capetanos, Environmental Services Director (right) display the Education Award.

In addition to the statewide award, the program also received the

CWEA Redwood Empire Section Public Education Award, large budget category for 2012. The District has won the Redwood Empire Section Public Education Award four times since 2008.

The District received the **CWEA Redwood Empire Section, Collection System of the Year Award**, Small System Category (0-249 miles), for 2012. The winner of this award is judged on its regulatory compliance, administrative procedures, maintenance, safety, and training programs, emergency response procedures, and significant accomplishments including funding and investing in capital projects. Agencies are judged on their geographical challenges. The District has won the CWEA Redwood Empire Section award three times since 2008 and also won the CWEA Statewide Award in 2010. (Pictured on front page are members of the Line Crew. Front row, left to right, Rodney Brown and Bob Buchholz; back row, Rob Fernandes and Brian Johnson.)

The District received the **Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting** for 2012 by the **Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA)** for its comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR). The Certificate of Achievement is the

highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by an agency and its management. The honor was given to the LGVSD's administration for their preparation of the award-winning CAFR.

Mark Williams, General Manager, and Susan McGuire, Administrative Services Manager, display the CAFR Award.



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The CAFR was judged by an impartial panel to meet the high standards of the program, including demonstrating a constructive "spirit of full disclosure" to clearly communicate its financial story and motivate potential users and user groups to read the CAFR. The GFOA is a nonprofit professional association serving approximately 17,500 government finance professionals with offices in Chicago, IL, and Washington, D.C.