



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

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CITY SEES FURTHER REDUCTIONS IN SEWER SPILLS SPILLS IN 2004 DOWN 65% FROM 2000

Thanks to an aggressive cleaning, repair and rehabilitation program, the City of San Diego's Metropolitan Wastewater Department has seen a 65 percent reduction in sewer spills in the City since Calendar Year 2000. The year 2000 is used as a baseline for comparisons when the City had 365 sewer spills, 33 of which reached public waters. In 2004, there were only 127 sewer spills with only 9 reaching public waters.

In 2001, with the support of the Mayor and City Council, the Metropolitan Wastewater Department embarked on an aggressive Sewer Spill Reduction Program. The key elements of this program included the cleaning of all 3,000 miles of the Municipal Sewerage System by March 2004; the televising of more than 1,200 miles of the oldest and most problematic sewer lines in the system; and an increase in the number of miles of sewer lines replaced or rehabilitated from 15 miles per year to 45 miles per year.

"The spill reduction program has obviously had an impact," noted Scott Tulloch, Director of Metropolitan Wastewater. "Any spill, regardless of cause, is one spill too many and during 2005 we'll continue working to lower those spill numbers even more."

There are two primary causes of sewer spills, not only in San Diego, but throughout the country: roots and cooking grease. Roots from trees, bushes and plant can invade a sewer line through the smallest crack and grow in size until a sewer line is blocked. Residents are asked to plant any tree or shrubbery 20 feet from a home's sewer lateral and to check the location of sewer lines before planting trees in open space areas. Cooking grease from homes and apartments, poured down a drain rather than disposed of in the trash, will quickly congeal inside a sewer line and gradually reduce the size of the line until a blockage causes a sewer backup and overflow. Residents are advised to put small

amounts of cooking fats, oils and grease in the trash, not down the drain. Larger amounts of cooking oil and grease can be taken to the Miramar Landfill Recycling Center. In both cases, it is recommended that property owners clean their sewer lateral connections at least once a year to prevent blockages that can backup onto private property, as well as into the street.

For more information on how residents can help prevent sewers spills, contact the Metropolitan Wastewater Hotline at 858-292-6484.

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