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Improvements Slated for Pretreatment Program

Updates ensure compliance

Just as the San Jose/Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant (Plant) Pretreatment Program monitors Industrial Users (IUs), state and federal regulators oversee and audit the City's efforts. Two evaluations by state and federal regulators in 2009 and earlier this year have sparked ideas for improving the Pretreatment Program (Program).

The City will be working in the coming months to enhance inspection procedures, provide more guidance and oversight for IU chemical and waste management, and correct compliance issues at certain facilities. Expect to see modifications in these areas:

- timelines for receiving and processing permit applications;

- evaluating proper waste and materials storage and handling at all facilities;
- coordinating referrals for hazardous materials inspections; and
- assessing the need for additional documentation for certain subcategories of dischargers, such as zero categorical dischargers.

Improvements suggested by the City's regulators ensure continued compliance and effectiveness of the Pretreatment Program. The Program, regulated under the Plant's National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit, monitors and regulates industrial pollutants before they reach the Plant. Since wastewater treatment plants are designed primarily to treat domestic waste with traditional pollutants such as organic material, oil and grease, and pH, industrial pollutants are difficult and expensive to treat.

Your Environmental Inspector will keep you informed of any changes to permit application procedures, inspection processes, or documentation review. Together we will continue to improve our processes in a manner that is good for your organization, the Plant, and the environment. Our water quality and public health depend on this collaboration. 🌊

The **Tributary Tribune** informs the Industrial Users of the Plant's service area, which includes the cities of San José, Santa Clara, Milpitas, Cupertino Sanitary District, West Valley Sanitation District (including Campbell, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, Saratoga), County Sanitation District No. 2-3, and Burbank Sanitary District.





Permit Application Due Dates

Without an up-to-date permit, your facility cannot discharge non-domestic wastewater to the sanitary sewer system. To avoid interruptions in your discharge operation, follow this guideline:

Submit permit renewal applications at least 90 days before the expiration of your existing Industrial Waste Discharge Permit.

This 90-day period allows time to process your application and issue a new permit before your old one expires. Without this lead time, you run the risk of preventing your company from discharging to the sanitary sewer. Permit application reminders are sent out by the City; however, you are still required to submit a timely application whether or not you receive the reminder.

Permit applications are also due 90 days before introducing new discharges and when modifications such as these occur:

- Ownership changes
- Adding or deleting process discharge or sample points
- Changes in average process flow of 20 percent or more
- Increasing flow over the capacity allotted for the Industrial User's property

Applications received after their due dates are subject to delinquent fees and enforcement actions. For permit application questions, contact your Environmental Inspector at (408) 945-3000. 🐾

Tracking Satisfaction



Results of an Industrial User (IU) survey conducted last year by the City of San José have been tallied, and 85 percent of IUs reported that they are “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the Pretreatment Program and its staff.

Those interviewed for the biennial Industrial Waste Dischargers Survey came from a pool that included 261 representatives from 238 companies. Nearly 100 IUs completed the survey.

The survey's most significant findings include:

- Specific areas of satisfaction — staff courtesy, responsiveness, assistance and knowledge, and program inspection and monitoring services — showed slight decreases from 2008, but levels remained at 80 percent or greater.
- In comparison to other areas, the Program received a slightly lower satisfaction rating for the permitting process (68 percent); however, this figure represents an upward trend from 2008 and 2006 surveys.

Survey gives thumbs up to Pretreatment Program

- Another encouraging result revealed a decrease in the number of respondents who had a specific problem or reason to be dissatisfied with the Program.
- Progress is evident in the areas of education and outreach as well as the website, with satisfaction ratings increasing 16 and 12 percent respectively. Among respondents who receive the *Tributary Tribune*, nearly 80 percent said they are satisfied with the Program's education and outreach, compared to 57 percent of those who don't receive it.

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Survey Results Summary

Item	2010 Positive Rating*	2008 Positive Rating*
Overall Rating	85%	86%
Staff Courtesy	89%	93%
Staff Responsiveness	85%	88%
Quality of Assistance	82%	84%
Staff Knowledge Level	83%	84%
Inspection Services	78%	85%
Monitoring Services	80%	81%
Consistency of Requirements/Information	75%	75%
Permitting	68%	62%

In response to the 88 percent of survey-takers who said emailing the *Tributary Tribune* would be a good way to disseminate Program information, you can now sign up to receive a link to the online version of the newsletter (see article below).

To continue to improve, the Pretreatment Program's website will be revamped in the future to make it even more user-friendly.

Program staff thanks everyone who participated in the 2010 survey. Your involvement helps us assess our customer service efforts and inspires continuous improvement! 🐟



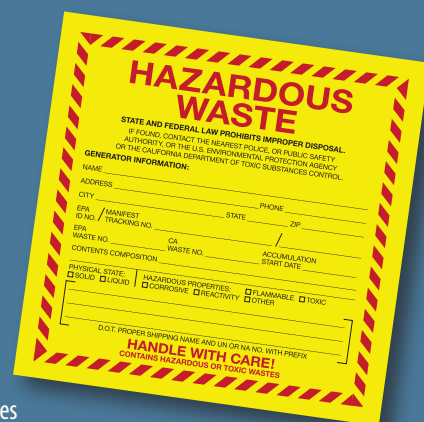
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Ask Your Inspector

Q: Why does my Environmental Inspector (Inspector) review my hazardous waste manifests?

A: Your Inspector reviews your hazardous waste manifests to confirm that you are correctly managing toxic materials. Because of the danger that toxic waste poses to our health and environment, it is critical to ensure proper handling in the transportation and disposal of such materials; this includes verifying these wastes have not been discharged to the sanitary sewer.



The manifest system is an important component of the cradle-to-grave regulation of hazardous waste. It is designed to ensure that waste is handled safely and appropriately at all stages of transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal, providing a complete paper trail of your waste. As a waste generator, you use the manifest system to verify that your hazardous waste has been properly delivered and that none has been lost or unaccounted for in the process. Through this accountability, you minimize risks to human health and the environment.

During an inspection, your Inspector may ask to see all manifests, since the law requires these and other important documents to be retained at your facility for at least three years. Maintaining well-organized and accessible records will reduce inspection time and make it easier for you to comply with record-keeping requirements. 🐟

Do you have a question? Submit it for future publication consideration to tributary.tribune@sanjoseca.gov.

Watershed Workforce



Alleyne Long

Alleyne (Alley) Long joined the City's Pretreatment Program in July 2010 as an Assistant Environmental Inspector. She was promoted this summer to an Environmental Inspector position and now works more closely with IUs to maintain their compliance with federal, state, and local regulations. Before coming to the Pretreatment Program, Alley conducted stormwater inspections for the City and spent several years working in the environmental consulting field. Alley is known for her ever-present smile, great attitude, and her willingness to help with any project. As a recipient of the 2011 Watershed Heroes Award, she was recognized by her peers for her outstanding team attitude. Alley's passion for environmental protection and conservation extends beyond her career; she bikes to work every day — even in the winter rain! Alley holds a Bachelors degree in Environmental Science from Mills College. 🐟

TributaryTribune

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Study Looks at Plant's Ability to Remove Emerging Contaminants



News reports of microconstituents — such as personal care products, pharmaceuticals, steroids, hormones, and trace organics — found in surface waters cause concern among the public and those who operate wastewater treatment plants.

The City conducted a study of emerging contaminants at the San Jose/Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant (Plant) in an effort to understand how these constituents pass through or are broken down by treatment. Of the 166 constituents analyzed, 95 were detected in at least some samples. Results, published in the July 2010 issue of *Water Environment & Technology* (WE&T), show that the Plant is successful at removing most detected microconstituents.

The study provides an important and necessary starting point for learning more about these compounds and prioritizing them for future examination. The results can also be used to focus pollution prevention and source control efforts.

To read the full article featured in WE&T go to www.sanjoseca.gov/esd/pub_res.asp and click on "Microconstituents at the San Jose/Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant" under Technical Reports. WE&T is a water quality magazine published by the Water Environment Federation. 

The Plant's final discharge point in Artesian slough



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