Sewer or Drain Cleaning and Maintenance/Septic Systems

Sewer Cleaning/Maintenance

Storm Drain Cleaning/Maintenance

- Store wastes collected from cleaning activities of the drainage system in appropriate containers or temporary storage sites in a manner that prevents discharge to the storm drain.

Septic System Cleaning/Maintenance

The following are several Best Management Practices to keep a septic system in good working order:

Household Habits

- Conserve water. Excessive water use is the most common cause of septic failure, so reduce water used for bathing, laundry, and flushing the toilet.
- Identify and and have repaired repair leaking pipes, sticking float valves in toilets, and dripping faucets to reduce water waste. A dripping faucet can waste 15-20 gallons per day.
- Shorten shower times and choose showers over baths to minimize wasted water. A full bath uses 50-60 gallons, while a shower uses only about 5 gallons per minute. Of course, a 20-minute shower is not a savings over a bath.
- Install low-volume toilets and low-flow showerheads. Typical toilets use 5-6 gallons per flush, providing nearly half the wastewater from a house. Flush toilets using 11/2 gallons of water are available.
- Keep a container of drinking water in the refrigerator. This saves having to run water until it is cold.
- Use toilet tissue that breaks up easily when wet to help prevent clogging. To test tissue quality, place a piece in a jar half full of water and shake. If the tissue breaks up easily, it is suitable. The color of tissue has no effect on septic system action.
- Do not use the toilet as a wastebasket. Don't flush facial tissue, diapers, tampons, or any kind of plastic down the drain.
- Eliminate the use of garbage disposals. Ground-up garbage does not decompose easily, causes rapid buildup of solids in the tank, and may move out of the tank into the drainfied, clogging distribution pipes and soil pores. If you have a disposal--don't use it. When building or remodeling--don't install one.
- Never put coffee grounds down your drain.
- Dispose of household hazardous waste properly.

Cleaning and Laundry

- Wash only full loads in the dishwasher. Typical dishwashers use about 13 gallons for each wash. Newer models use 8-9 gallons.
- Use low-phosphate dishwasher detergent.
- Wash only full loads of clothes and use front-loading washers and suds-savers to save water. To avoid overloading your system, spread washing over the week instead of washing several loads on one day. A single load takes about 40 gallons.
- Use liquid laundry detergent because it's less likely to have fillers or carriers that may damage the septic system. Try to use the minimum amount because detergents can cause problems with the system.
- Minimize use of household chemicals and cleaners. Normal amounts of household detergents, bleaches, drain cleaners, toilet bowl deodorizers, and other cleaners won't harm bacterial action in the septic tank.

Training

- Train crews in proper maintenance activities, including record keeping and disposal. Only properly trained individuals are allowed to handle hazardous materials/wastes. Train employees in proper and consistent methods for disposal. Train staff regarding non-stormwater discharges
- OSHA-required Health and Safety Training 29 CFR 1910.120 plus annual Refresher Training (as needed).
- OSHA Confined Space Entry training (Cal-OSHA Confined Space, Title 8 and federal OSHA 29 CFR 1910.146).