

Newsletter of the Crockett Community Services District

OUR DISTRICT

The Crockett Community Services District (CCSD) provides certain municipal services for the unincorporated towns of Crockett and Port Costa including sanitary sewer services, recreation, and maintenance.

The Recreation Department offers Crockett and Port Costa residents access to the Crockett Community Center, Swimming Pool, Alexander Park, bocce ball courts and tennis courts. Upcoming events are listed on the pool schedule.

Maintenance services include maintenance of Crockett's Memorial Hall (Legion Hall), Crockett's downtown plaza, Crockett's decorative green street lights, and numerous green iron fences on either Pomona Ave. or Rolph Ave. The bridgehead entrance to Crockett is property-owned by the State but through small grants and donations to the District, along with volunteer labor, the District intervened to protect the area from decline while the future of the bridgehead is discussed by Caltrans and the District.

OUR DISTRICT BOARD

The 2013 Board of Directors of the Crockett Community Services District includes:

Harold Burnett, President
Kristopher Vickers, Vice-President
Pat Glover
John Mackenzie
Fred Clerici

Your elected officials receive no compensation for their service. Our District Board holds its regular meetings on the fourth Wednesday of each month. The meetings are held at the Crockett Community Center at 7 PM.

Commissioners and Committee appointees are dedicated volunteers who receive no compensation. They have been appointed to assist the District Board by recommending operational policy and overseeing staff activities. The Commissions provide an opportunity for residents to interact with our local government on issues that concern the public.

Please visit our www.town.crockett.ca.us for a calendar of meeting dates and more information about our District.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I would like to take this opportunity to say how happy I am to be serving as President of the CCSD Board this year. While participating with many other volunteers at the town-

wide clean up, I felt proud to be part of a community that shows such support in maintaining our town. We as individuals have had the ability to show our continued support by voting through the recent increased parcel tax for the Crockett Recreation Department.

Harold Burnett, President

FLUSHABLE WIPES – NOT WORTH THE COST

Many household cleaning products are labeled and marketed as disposable; many baby hygiene products are labeled both disposable and flushable. And while these products may be marketed as a convenience item in this way, the truth is that these household wipes and cleaning towelettes have the ability to clog and stop up not only the sewer line on your property, but also can cause blockage and service problems in the public sewer system and pump stations. Unlike toilet paper, these products don't break down once they are flushed. They can cause blockages in your on-site side sewer, especially older pipelines that may have grease, roots, or other obstructions already existing. A repair of the side sewer line can leave the homeowner with a nasty repair bill. On a larger scale when these products make their way into the public sewer system they collect together and cause clogs in the sewer mainlines and get tangled in pump stations requiring repair or replacement of equipment resulting in higher maintenance costs and increased sewer use fees.



Help stop clogging pipes...don't flush wipes. Save yourself and our District from costly repairs – put wipes, rags, and towels in the trash, not the toilet.

SMOKE TESTING IN CROCKETT / VALONA

To identify sections of sewers which may exhibit inflow, the Crockett Sanitary Department will begin smoke testing our sanitary sewers in the Valona area of town in the coming weeks. Smoke blowers are placed on or in manholes and smoke is blown through the sewer system. Anywhere the smoke exits, there is potential for storm water to enter the sewer system.

Prior to beginning the smoke testing, notices will be placed on the front door of every building on the streets to be smoke tested at least 24 to 48 hours in advance. The smoke that comes out of the vent stacks on houses or holes in the ground is non-toxic, harmless, and has no odor. It does not create a fire hazard.

What is the purpose of smoke testing?

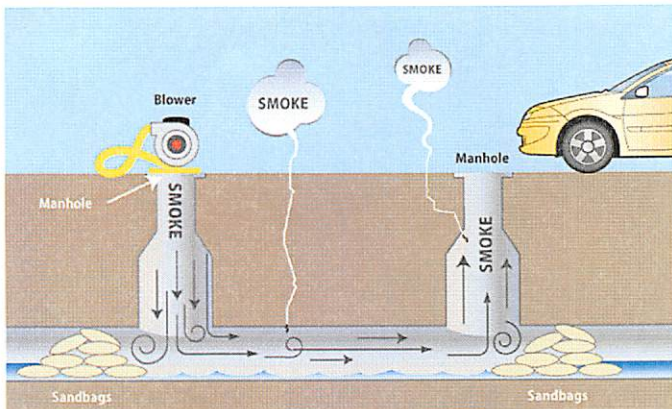
Smoke testing is important preventative maintenance that helps CCSD pinpoint the location of sewer defects that may need repairs. Inflow sources such as roof leaders, foundation drains, abandoned building sewers, faulty connections, and yard area drains contribute to this problem. It is illegal to connect these sources of inflow to the sanitary sewer system. Millions of gallons of excess water infiltrate sanitary sewers each year through these defects. This raises the cost of wastewater treatment for the entire community and increases the risk of sewage overflows during storms.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) endorsed smoke tests as a standard way to find defects in the sewer system. Defects in the sewer system allow rain water to enter the system, increasing flows and treatment costs. If smoke can exit through a defect, rain water can enter through that defect. These tests are economical, convenient, and effective. In the long-run, it may reduce the cost to customers.

Our sanitary sewer system is designed to carry wastewater only. The storm water drainage system is a separate network of pipes that channels rainwater and other runoff into creeks and waterways, and eventually into the Carquinez Strait.

What happens during a smoke test?

CCSD would hire contactors to isolate a small section of the sewer system and then blow smoke through that section from a manhole. If there are defects in either the main sewer pipes or the private sewer laterals that serve individual homes and businesses, or if there are illegal cross-connections between the sewer and storm drain, smoke will rise to the surface and reveal these problems.



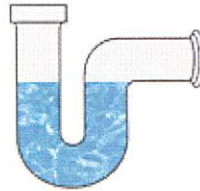
SMOKE TESTING FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What do I need to do to prepare before the smoke tests?

Water can evaporate from drain traps of unused plumbing fixtures. Therefore, the day prior to any testing, property owners should pour water down all drains of plumbing fixtures that are not regularly used (e.g., guest bathroom, bar sink). This ensures the P-traps are full to prevent smoke from entering the house. It is also a good idea to keep bathroom doors closed during the test period.

Will smoke enter my house?

Smoke rarely enters a home or business during the test if the P-traps are full of water, but because a building's plumbing is connected to the sanitary sewer system, smoke could enter through a plumbing defect in the home or business. The most frequent entry point is around a bad wax ring on the toilet. If smoke does enter your home or business, open a window. Visible smoke and odor should last no more than 15-20 minutes.



P-trap

What should I do if I have emphysema or respiratory problems? Is the smoke harmful? What should I do during a smoke test?

Although the smoke is considered to have no adverse health effects, individuals with respiratory conditions should take special precautions. Smoke rarely enters a home, but it would be best if you sat outside for the duration of the smoke test, about 15-20 minutes. If you cannot sit outside, open the windows and shut your bathroom doors. Also, tell the CCSD contractor or call the District office that you have a respiratory condition.

What should I do if smoke comes out of a plumbing fixture in my house?

Open windows and doors. The smoke usually clears in 15-20 minutes. If you are home during the testing, please inform the CCSD or contracting crew member that smoke has entered your home. You also should call a professional plumber. If smoke has entered, your plumbing may have a defect that is also allowing sewer gases and odors to enter. Sewer gases can be both unpleasant and a health risk. We advise you to determine where the smoke entered and contact a plumber to correct any defects.

Do I need to be home during smoke testing?

No, but you might want to leave your kitchen or bathroom windows slightly ajar.

I work during the day and have animals inside. What do I do during the smoke test?

Smoke rarely enters a home, but if you have to leave your animals inside, leave windows open slightly for ventilation. On the rare occasion when smoke enters a home, it is usually through a defect in the bathroom, so do not enclose animals in the bathroom. Shut bathroom doors and leave the bathroom window open.

How long does the smoke test last?

Approximately 15-20 minutes.

Are the police and fire departments aware of the smoke testing?

Yes. CCSD notifies the local Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office and the Crockett-Valona Fire Department.

Can smoke clog the sewer?

No. Smoke cannot stop up a sewer. This clean, efficient smoke is made up of a vaporous substance similar to fog; it is 50% atmospheric moisture.

Who is responsible for paying to repair plumbing problems that are discovered through smoke testing?

Property owners are responsible for maintaining their inside plumbing, as well as for repairing cracks, breaks, and clogs in their private sewer laterals that connect their home to the District's main sewer pipeline. If you see smoke coming out of your yard this probably indicates that you have cracks in your sewer lateral that need repair. CCSD is responsible for maintaining and repairing the public wastewater collection system, the larger pipes that usually run under the street.

Is it OK if I see smoke coming from my overflow protection device?

Yes, if the overflow protection device is working properly, you should see smoke coming out of it.

REPLACE YOUR TOILET – SAVE WATER AND \$\$

Treatment of wastewater is one of the largest expenses faced by the Crockett and Port Costa Sanitary Departments. If everyone uses less water, less wastewater enters the sewer system. Conserving water not only lowers your water bill but has a direct effect on the sewer use charge assessed annually by our District. Do your part and conserve.

East Bay Municipal Water District (EBMUD) offers a rebate to Crockett residents of up to \$100 when you upgrade your old toilet using 3.5 gallons per flush (GPF) or higher to a new, high-efficiency model. This program is good through June 30, 2013. For more information visit www.ebmud.com and search "toilet rebate".

The Contra Costa Water District (CCWD) currently offers a High Efficiency Toilet Rebate of up to \$125 per toilet and also has a High-Efficiency Washing Machine Rebate Program providing rebates of up to \$100 to Port Costa residents. Visit www.ccwater.com/conserves/rebates.asp for more information.

SEWER INSPECTION REQUIREMENT

In 2007, the District adopted Ordinance No. 07-1 requiring property owners to obtain a "Certificate of Compliance" for their sanitary sewer laterals prior to the sale of their property. The reasoning for this requirement is to help ensure that sanitary sewers are operating properly, are not leaching into the ground, and are not infiltrating the drainage system that flows to the Bay. Our website at www.town.crockett.ca.us has more information on this important program.

REPORTING SEWER PROBLEMS

For all matters concerning sewer service in Crockett or Port Costa, the correct number to call is always 787-2992. Call us day or night to report any sewer problem in Crockett or Port Costa. Our staff will respond quickly to all inquiries, complaints, or reports of sewer problems. When a sewer

backup occurs in your home, it may not be obvious whether the problem is in the house lateral or the public sewer. You may save yourself distress and money by calling our Sanitary Department first. Our staff will help determine where the problem is and will quickly take care of any blockage in the public sewer. There is no charge for our help.

BEFORE YOU DIG

Safe digging is no accident, even in your own yard. Always call 811 before your dig! It is FREE and will keep you from harm. Sewers, water and gas lines can be anywhere without your knowledge and digging without knowing what is underground can cause severe consequences, such as serious injuries, fires, or other property damage. We have public sewers through over 100 properties in Crockett and Port Costa. Some utilities in the older communities of Crockett and Port Costa are not that deep and people can hit utilities even when digging to plant shrubs or trees. All this can be easily avoided just by calling 811. Please call. Play it safe, and avoid the grief!

FATS, OIL, AND GREASE

Just as excess fat isn't good for our health, it's not good for our plumbing. Sewer overflows and backups can cause health hazards, damage home interiors, and threaten the environment. An increasingly common cause of overflows is sewer pipes blocked by grease. Grease gets into the sewer from household drains as well as from poorly maintained grease traps in restaurants and other businesses.

Where does the grease come from?

Most of us know grease as the byproduct of cooking. Grease is found in such things as:

- ▶ Meat Fats
- ▶ Lard
- ▶ Cooking Oil
- ▶ Shortening
- ▶ Butter and Margarine
- ▶ Food Scraps
- ▶ Baking Goods
- ▶ Sauces
- ▶ Dairy Products

Too often, grease is washed into the plumbing system, usually through the kitchen sink. Grease sticks to the insides of sewer pipes (both on your property and in the streets). Over time, the 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 drain. Commercial additives, including detergents, that claim to dissolve grease may pass grease down the line and cause problems in other areas.

The results can be:

- ▶ Raw sewage overflowing in your home or your neighbor's home;
- ▶ An expensive and unpleasant cleanup that often must be paid by you, the homeowner;
- ▶ Raw sewage overflowing into parks, yards, and streets;

- ▶ An increase in operation and maintenance costs for local sewer departments, which causes higher sewer bills for customers.

What we can do to help:

The easiest way to solve the grease problems and help prevent overflows of raw sewage is to keep this material out of the sewer system in the first place. There are several ways to do this.

1. Never pour grease down sink drains or into toilets.
2. Scrape grease and food scraps from trays, plates, pots, pans, utensils, and grills and cooking surfaces into a can or the trash for disposal (or recycling where available).
3. Do not put grease down garbage disposals. Put baskets/strainers in sink drains to catch food scraps and other solids, and empty the drain baskets/strainers into the trash for disposal.
4. Speak with your friends and neighbors about the problems of grease in the sewer system and how to keep it out.

Visit our website or call the Crockett or Port Costa Sanitary Department if you have any questions.

HAZARDOUS WASTE

Please never pour unwanted chemicals, paint, or medicine down the drain. Protect our treatment plants in Crockett and Port Costa as well as our Bay by safe handling and disposal of all paints, cleaning solvents, pesticides, fungicides, chemicals, paint strippers, copper algacides, dormant tree sprays, root killers, and pool and spa chemicals.

A drive-thru drop-off Hazardous Waste center is located at 101 Pittsburg Avenue in Richmond. The center will dispose of common household hazardous waste that might otherwise harm the environment. There is no charge and no appointment needed! Residential drop-off is available Thursdays, Fridays, and the 1st Saturday of each month 9am - 4pm (closed 12-12:30 pm). Call 1-888-412-9277 for more information. You can also get helpful information from their web site at www.recyclemore.com/.

DRUGS, MEDICATIONS, PHARMACEUTICALS

Never flush, pour down the drain, or put drugs, medications, or pharmaceuticals in the garbage or recycle bins. These products and many others can upset the sewage

treatment process if dumped down the drain. Chemotherapy drugs and other medicines are also collected for safe disposal. Please dispose of all medicines safely at collection bins or at the drive-thru drop Hazardous Waste Center located at 101 Pittsburg Avenue in Richmond.

ELECTRONIC RECYCLING DROP OFF

The District works in partnership with electronic recyclers to provide free electronic recycling service. We will accept your old batteries, compact fluorescent light bulbs, thermometers, barometers, thermostats, automobile switches, and neon lighting and dispose of them properly. We will even give you a FREE easy to read digital thermometer in exchange for your old mercury thermometer.

Computers, monitors, televisions (27" or smaller), VCRs and other electronic items are also picked up upon request. Keeping mercury, lead, nickel, cadmium, and other toxic metals out of the trash benefits the environment. Please play it safe by dropping off or calling us at 787-2992 to collect your small electronic or hazardous waste items.

SUMMER JOBS

Our Recreation Department is now hiring temporary staff for our swimming pool. Lifeguards, swim instructors and office staff are needed. Applications are available at our Community Center (Tues-Fri) and at our pool (Mon-Fri 3-5pm). For more information, call 787-2414.

DISTRICT OFFICE

The Crockett CSD office is on the main floor of 628 Second Avenue, Room 206, in Crockett. This is the place to come for sewer permits, for drawings to be stamped, to get a list of bonded sewer contractors, and for all sewer service information for Crockett and Port Costa. Employees are often working out in the field and it may help you to call ahead for an appointment.

OUR WEBSITE

Visit our website www.town.crockett.ca.us for the latest information about the District. Residents and visitors alike will find useful information on various public services including emergency services, recreation, sewer service, garbage service, and others. Meeting dates, agendas, and minutes are available online.

Crockett Community Services District

P.O. Box 578 / 628 2nd Avenue, # 206, Crockett, CA 94525
Phone: (510) 787-2992 Fax: (510) 787-2459

Recreation Commission

Jeff Airoidi - David Botta - Louise Choquette - Tom Cusack
Elena Gomez - Ruth James - Karen Peterson - John Valentini

Bridgehead Advisory Committee

- Howard Adams - Bob Aita - Steve Carvalho
Kent Peterson - Mary Wais - Jeff Wells

Board of Directors

Harold Bumett - Kris Vickers
Patrick Glover - John Mackenzie - Fred Clerici

Crockett Sanitary Commission

Robert A. Dahl - Mary Wais - Jon Wolthuis
Howard Adams - Ron Maria - Don Barton (alt.)

Memorial Hall Advisory Committee

Harvey Duran - Michael Kirker
Scott Lawton - Kent Peterson - Ron Wilson

General Manager

Dale McDonald - manager@town.crockett.ca.us

Port Costa Sanitary Commission

Joe Surges - Anthony Guarnieri
Tom Cusack - John Mann - Geoff Chirgwin

Police Liaison Committee

John Angell - Barbra Cardwell - David Botta - Mary Wais
Elena Gomez - Elaia McDonald - John Valentini