

SECTION XI

COMMUNICATION PROGRAM

Communication Program

The purpose of the Communication Program is to describe the means by which the District communicates with its stakeholders and the public on the development, implementation, and performance of the SSMP. Another aspect of this Program is to increase public awareness of services provided by the District and other related wastewater industry information through the District's public outreach efforts.

Modes of Communication

There are several opportunities for stakeholders and the public to participate and provide input into the development and update of the District SSMP. During its initial development stage, as with each SSMP Audit and update of the SSMP, the SSMP and related documents are presented to the District Board for review and acceptance. As previously noted, SSMP Audits are performed every two years and re-certification and acceptance of updated SSMPs are required every five years. In addition to the extensive initial development process, to date there have been three SSMP Audit Reports and four updates and re-certifications of the SSMP that have been presented to the Board (ref. Appendix F.2). Prior to each Board Meeting, these documents are included in Board Agenda packet which are readily available for review on the District's website.

Once the SSMP is accepted by the Board, it becomes available on the District website for review and downloading at: <http://www.westvalleysan.org/documents/engineering/ssmp>.

The primary contact for matters concerning this SSMP and public outreach effort is:

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Stakeholders

In addition to the public, parties that are considered as stakeholders include the District's Board of Directors and the cities they represent, the City of San Jose, Santa Clara County Department of Environmental Health, Santa Clara Valley Water District, and the San Jose-Santa Clara Regional Wastewater Facility. E-mail notifications to stakeholder contacts will

provide an opportunity to present future SSMP Audits and SSMPs for an opportunity to provide their input. This will help to ensure that communication lines between the District and its stakeholders are open and that information about activities or policies that may have an impact on them is shared.

Public Outreach

Communication of District services, collection system and wastewater related information, and other pertinent information is very important to the understanding and appreciation for this District and the wastewater industry as a whole. The District's website provides links to regulatory and wastewater industry sites, including the State of California's SSO reporting site (http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/ciwqs/), the California Water Environment Association's site (<http://cwea.org/>), and the Water Environment Federation information website (<http://www.wef.org/>), among others.

Forms of advertisement being considered are local newspapers and assistance from member city's public outreach programs. FOG community outreach materials include a District letter informing the public of grease issues, a "Fat-Free Sewers" brochure developed by the Water Environment Federation, a grease scraper, and grease can lid. These materials are shown in Appendix G.1. Reduction of SSOs is a District wide goal and BACWA brochures titled Sanitary Sewer Overflows and Sewer Laterals is distributed as part of the District permit process. These brochures are illustrated in Appendix G 2 and G.3. To emphasize to the public that some things do not belong in the sewer, the brochure "It's a TOILET, Not a Trashcan!" is provided with the FOG packet and permit packet. This brochure is shown in Appendix G.4.

Raising public awareness on the critical state of infrastructure and how it profoundly impacts each and every person is vitally important for their understanding of why capital improvements are necessary. The infrastructure related to water, wastewater, and stormwater systems is the focus of the "Liquid Assets" video provided on the District's website (ref. Appendix G.5). It is valuable information that provides insight into the need for public agencies to re-invest funds in order to keep our infrastructure intact and working properly.

Another outreach effort is focused on increasing District recognition and to inform the public of our "free" service to assist them with some of their sewer issues. Every service truck has decals showing our District logo and prompting them to learn more about the District by visiting our website (ref. Appendix G.6). The District also prompts the public to "call us FIRST" and emphasizing to the public that they can anytime, 24/7 for any sewer related overflow or backup. Their calls for service are very important to the District since every second counts when an overflow or backup occurs. Any delay in addressing the blockage, would likely increase the volume of sewage spilled and consequently, the cost of restoration and damage to the environment or home.