



Enforcement News

Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
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Sacramento Area Sewer District Settles Sewage Spill Violations

Agreement Includes Project to Supply Clean Drinking Water

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SACRAMENTO – The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board and the Sacramento Area Sewer District (SASD) have agreed to a \$223,539 settlement regarding 80 spills of raw sewage to surface waters over a three-and-a-half-year period. Part of the agreement includes a project to supply a clean and reliable source of drinking water to residents with contaminated wells.

The largest spill took place Oct. 17-19, 2015, when a contractor installed a temporary sewage line over Arcade Creek and then left for the weekend. Rain fell over the weekend, causing the creek flow to increase, and a joint in the line separated, spilling sewage into the creek. No one inspected the temporary line or noticed the spill until the contractor returned on Monday. More than 188,000 gallons of raw sewage spilled into Arcade Creek. When SASD learned of the spill, it mobilized a response team and was able to recover some of the sewage.

The other 79 spills took place between March 2012 and Nov. 2015. More than 300,000 gallons of raw sewage entered surface waters that lead to the Sacramento River. SASD has attributed the spills to operational and structural failures, including root intrusion, grease deposition and the presence of debris.

“These sewage spills have the potential to impact aquatic life and human health,” said Andrew Altevogt, assistant executive officer for the Regional Water Board. “This settlement acknowledges the serious nature of the spills, as well as efforts that SASD will take to reduce future spills.”

Any entity that operates a sewage collection system over one mile in length is required to enroll in the Statewide General Waste Discharge Requirements for Sanitary Sewer Systems. Among other items, this permit requires that sewer systems be properly operated and maintained to prevent discharges of raw sewage to surface waters. Raw sewage contains highly elevated concentrations of coliform organisms, biochemical oxygen demand, and

ammonia, which can lead to low dissolved oxygen in surface water that can impact aquatic life and human health.

As a condition of the agreement, SASD will pay half the penalty to the State Water Board's Cleanup and Abatement Account. The funds in this account are used to provide public agencies, nonprofit organizations and tribal governments with grants to clean up pollution when there are no viable responsible parties.

The remaining half of the penalty will be used to fund a Supplemental Environmental Project in the southern portion of Sacramento County. The project consists of connecting private residences that are within the general vicinity of the intersection of Fruitridge Road and Stockton Boulevard that are currently dependent on contaminated private domestic wells for drinking water and in-home use, to a public water supply.

The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board is a California state agency responsible for the preservation and enhancement of water quality. For more information, visit the Central Valley Water Board's [website](#).

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