

# What You Put Down the Drain Matters!

## Information Sheet

### Regional Source Control Program

The Capital Regional District (CRD) is responsible for managing the region's sewage after it has been carried through the municipal and CRD sewer systems.

### Wastewater Treatment

There are seven regional wastewater treatment facilities, including a new plant at McLoughlin Point. The method and level of treatment at each facility is **secondary** or **tertiary**.

Despite having treatment, what we put down the drain still matters. Source control is the practice of preventing and reducing contaminants at the source — our drains. This is the first step in wastewater treatment and protects sewer workers, infrastructure and marine environment.

### The CRD Sewer Use Bylaw

The CRD enacted the Sewer Use Bylaw (No. 2922) in 1994. It helps reduce the cost of sewage treatment by controlling the contaminants that industries, businesses, institutions and households discharge into our sanitary sewer system.

### Wastewater Treatment Levels

**Secondary Treatment** removes biological impurities and insoluble matter from water.

**Tertiary Treatment** removes nutrients and some chemical contaminants remaining after secondary treatment.

### Businesses

The Sewer Use Bylaw has requirements for sectors such as food services, automotive repair, dry cleaning, recreational facilities and dental operations. These requirements ensure harmful chemicals and contaminants are kept out of wastewater or removed before it goes down the drain.

### Residents

We all create wastewater so we need to practice source control at home as well. There are many things residents can do to keep items that cause blockages, backups and contaminants out of our sewer system.

### Medications

These can cause problems if they go down the drain. Unused or expired medications should be taken to your local pharmacy under the BC Medications Return program so they can be disposed of safely.

- ✓ Return unwanted medications to a pharmacy for free



Return medications to a pharmacy

### Fats, Oils and Grease

These can cause problems for our infrastructure and environment by clogging our pipes and impacting the treatment process. They increase plant maintenance costs and use up additional energy and capacity to break them down at the treatment plant.

- ✓ Wipe small amounts of grease with a paper towel and put the paper towel in your compost
- ✓ Cool larger amounts of grease in a container until solid and empty into your kitchen scraps or garbage
- ✓ Large amounts of liquid oil can be recycled at the Hartland Depot



Fats, oils and grease go in your kitchen scraps or garbage

## Microplastics

These can end up in our oceans where they are mistaken as food by birds and fish. They are tiny plastic particles and fibres less than 5 mm in size that can get into our wastewater from washing polyester clothing, by putting items like contact lenses down the drain or by throwing plastic litter where it can end up in storm drains.

- ✓ Choose natural fibre clothing
- ✓ Reuse and recycle plastic items
- ✓ Organize a community clean up to get rid of plastic litter



Choose natural fibre clothing

## Unflushable Waste

These can cause costly blockages and backups. This has become a bigger issue in recent years with increased use of products marketed as “flushable.” Our sewer and treatment infrastructure is not designed for items like wipes, hair, dental floss and other things that are often flushed but shouldn’t be.

Only the Three Ps (pee, poo and toilet paper) are safe for our sewer systems.

- ✓ Keep obstructive unflushable waste out of the drains
- ✓ Don’t use the toilet as a trashcan



Only flush the Three Ps down the toilet

## Chemicals

These can be especially hazardous if they go down the drain. Solvents, oven cleaners, varnishes, paints and pesticides could be poisonous, explosive, corrosive or flammable — and very dangerous if disposed of incorrectly.

- ✓ Return unknown products and hazardous products to a depot, including Hartland Depot
- ✓ Clean green — try our recipes for economical and environmentally-friendly cleaners (find them on our website)



Clean green and return harmful chemicals to a depot

## Clean Water Begins at Home

We all have a role to play in how clean our wastewater is when it returns to the environment. Even with advanced treatment, what you put down the drain matters.

By practicing source control, we keep contaminants that can impact treatment infrastructure and the environment out of our wastewater, right from the source.



### Capital Regional District

Environmental Services

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[www.crd.bc.ca/cleanwater](http://www.crd.bc.ca/cleanwater)

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