

## Cutting Costs for SLCWD

You are paying to have your water treated – avoid water waste. Along with implementing water conservation measures, all property owners can play a part in helping to reduce costs by maintaining their house water and sewer service lines. Following are some suggestions:

A damaged cleanout or sewer service lateral line could cause a stoppage in your plumbing and allow surface runoff into the sewer system which results in increased pumping and treatment costs. Your private sewer lateral cleanout is located on your property near the street and allows access for cleaning and inspection of your sewer lateral pipeline. The end of snow melt is the perfect time for you to perform the annual inspection of your cleanout to be certain the lid is securely attached and that the cleanout has not been damaged over the winter.

Avoid putting fats, oils, and grease down the drain. These compounds may seem liquid when you are done cooking, but quickly cool down and solidify. When put down the kitchen drain, they accumulate along the sides and top of sewer pipes. Once a layer forms on the inside of the pipe, it attracts other fats, oils, and grease eventually plugging the sewer line which can lead to overflows and backups that can create health hazards, damage home interiors, and threaten the environment. Grease-related blockages are one of the most common causes of sewer spills. The easiest solution is to let the fats, oils, and grease cool down and congeal in either the cooking container itself or a disposable container, such as a tin can. Once the material is in a semi-solid form, simply place the material in your garbage can.

In-sink garbage disposal units have become quite common in our kitchens, providing a convenient way to get rid of food waste. But disposals can add 50% to the volume of solids in a sewer system, making it much more costly to dispose of waste through the garbage disposal than it is to put it in the garbage. Once in the sewer system, the ground-up waste can cause problems in the collection system by settling out and causing blockages. At the wastewater treatment plant, the material must be treated before the water can be discharged to the Yuba River in the winter or land applied to the Soda Springs ski hill in the summer. Treatment requires the use of large tanks and lots of energy to aerate the sewage in order to oxidize the organic material. In the end, the organic waste is collected as sewage sludge (a.k.a. biosolids) and hauled to the landfill anyway. So please do the sewer system a favor and put solid waste in the garbage rather than the disposal unit. This is especially important on busy holiday weekends when the collection and treatment systems are working their hardest.

Certain homes in low-lying areas of Serene Lakes have been required to install backflow prevention valves and valve boxes on the sewer service pipeline between the house and the sewer lateral cleanout. This valve, when working properly, prevents the backup of sewage into the home through the plumbing facilities in the event of a clogged or overloaded main sewer pipeline. District ordinances require that the valves be inspected annually by the homeowner to be sure they are free of debris, are able to perform under stress conditions, and the flapper moves freely. If you are not sure whether your home has a backflow prevention valve, where the valve or your sewer cleanout is located, or how to inspect them, you may call our Operations & Maintenance Office at 530-426-7802 for assistance.