

Who Ya Gonna Call about Water Pollution?

Reporting suspected pollution problems can avoid property damage (like slides), health hazards (such as sewer leaks). It also can be key to survival of fish and wildlife.

But figuring out where to call can be difficult! Here is a local guide.

What is pollution?

- Dumping or hosing ANYTHING other than water into creeks, storm drains, or San Francisco Bay is pollution. This includes soil, paint, pet feces, soap, pesticides, fertilizer, garden clippings, dirt, rocks, and concrete slurry or dust.
- Sewage leaks of any kind are pollution. (Look for remnants of toilet paper around clean-outs). So are discharges of drinking water from hoses or broken pipes. Chloramines used to purify this water are lethal to aquatic life.
- Permits and protective measures are required where grading or building could cause erosion or release significant amounts of silt.
- Construction or clearing on creek banks requires permits from the California Department of Fish and Game and Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Useful numbers:

For a broken hydrant or water main, or flooding in the street, call EB MUD, 1-866-403- 2683..

For dumping or spills in progress, call police: 911 or non-emergency numbers.

For spills or dumping not in progress:

- **In Berkeley:** Call 311 or Berkeley Public Works (510) 981-6620.
- **In Albany:** During office hours, call Albany Public Works (510) 524-9543 (sewer leaks or city work) or Environmental Resources (510) 528-5754. After hours, call Albany Police Department's Non-Emergency line: (510) 525-7300.
- **In El Cerrito:** During office hours, call Stege Sanitary District (510) 524-4668 (sewer leaks) or Environmental Programs (510) 559-7685. After hours, call El Cerrito's non-emergency line: 510-237-3233 or emergency line: 510-233-1214.
- **In Contra Costa County, call 1-800-NO DUMPING.**

If work in a stream bed seems likely to cause serious erosion or harm wildlife, or if you suspect such work is being done without a State Department of Fish and Game Permit, call California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Bay Delta Region at (707) 944-5500 or the 24-hour CalTIP line, 1-888-334-CalTIP. If construction is involved, also call local building inspectors.

If you are not satisfied with the response to a report, call the Regional Water Quality Control Board (state agency in charge of water-quality programs), (510) 622-2300.

The environmental watchdog group San Francisco Baykeeper asks for reports of pollution on an online form at <http://sfbaykeeper.org/get-involved/report-pollution-violation/>.

Friends of Five Creeks also is interested -- (510) 848-9358 or f5creeks@gmail.com.