

**Important County Public Works
Phone Numbers**

Main Number: (925) 313-2000
Fax Number: (925) 313-2333
Flood Control District: (925) 313-2270
Maintenance Division: (925) 313-7000
Permit Center: (925) 674-7744
Records Section: (925) 313-2356
Watershed Program: (925) 313-2296

**Contra Costa County
Public Works Department
255 Glacier Drive, Martinez
(925) 313-2000**

Hours: Monday - Thursday 7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Friday 7:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Closed 12-1

Brian M. Balbas - Director
Deputy Directors - Allison Knapp
Stephen Kowalewski, Carrie Ricci; Joe Yee
www.cccpublicworks.org

**Ironhouse Sanitary District
450 Walnut Meadows Drive, Oakley
(925) 625-2279**

Hours: Monday - Friday
8 a.m. - 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Chad Davisson - General Manager
www.ironhousesanitarydistrict.com

**Bethel Island Municipal Improvement District
3085 Stone Road, Bethel Island
(925) 684-2210**

Hours: Monday - Friday
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Regina Espinoza - District Manager
Lawrence Martins - Levee Superintendent
Jason Garcia - Asst. Levee Superintendent
Denece Bixby - District Clerk
www.bimid.com



Bethel Island Culverts, Ditches & Draining the Island During Heavy Rains



Living in Paradise

Living on Bethel Island can feel like paradise when you are surrounded by the Delta and the water recreation opportunities it affords. But that same water can become a huge liability when it floods our properties during a storm or in a sewer backup.

Preventing such catastrophes is everyone's responsibility, and the goal of this brochure is to show what you can do to help.



The Basics

There are three components to the drainage system on Bethel Island: public ditches, culverts and private pipes.

Roadside ditches are the purview of the Bethel Island Municipal Improvement District (BIMID), which uses them to drain water so it can be pumped over the levees to the river. Culverts that cross beneath public roads are maintained by Contra Costa County Public Works crews.

That leaves private pipes, ditches, driveway culverts and inlets that are the responsibility of the island's property owners. These private drainage systems include those installed by your property's original developer, or later by one of its owners. Frequently plans and records were not kept on these older collection systems, so their location or existence may not be known until they fail or cause flooding.

The sewer system should not be confused with a flood water drainage system. The sanitary sewer system that collects sewage water only from our homes and businesses is owned by Ironhouse Sanitary District (ISD). Rain water runoff should never be drained down the sewer systems.

Your property, your responsibility

The proper maintenance of a private storm drain is the responsibility of the owner of the property where it is located.

County ordinance prohibits anything that impedes the natural flow of storm waters, including construction, alteration, or repair of any drainage system without proper permits.

Blocking the natural flow of water can cause a problem for neighboring properties and potential liability for the property owner causing a blockage. **It is illegal to drain rainwater from your property into ISD's sewer pipes or sewer clean-outs.**

Rainwater runoff from personal property must be directed to ditches, culverts and storm drains specifically intended for that purpose.

The reason? During wet weather, illegal pumping and draining of rainwater could overload ISD's sewer collection system, which is not designed to collect rainwater. This can cause sewage to back up into homes and increase the cost of treating wastewater.

Illegal rainwater discharge is a violation of ISD's Ordinances 25 and 63, which makes doing so a criminal misdemeanor offense punishable by law.



What should you do?

Avoid bigger problems later by taking action now. Inspect your drainage system after each heavy rain and remove any accumulated debris. If a drainpipe cannot be visually inspected from inlets or manholes, you should periodically hire a professional sewer cleaning company to electronically inspect its interior and remove any debris buildup.

Observe the flow of water during heavy rains and investigate any unusual conditions.

Develop a plan to prevent stormwater from entering your home and test it to be sure you will be able to implement it in an emergency. Obtain any supplies you will need.

Seek the professional help of a general engineering contractor or a civil engineer if you observe major changes in the drainage system such as erosion, sediment buildup, or unusual water backups. If you discover significant corrosion of a metal pipe, severe cracking of concrete pipe or shifting of pipe segments, consider repairing or replacing it as soon as possible.

A general engineering contractor, with a Class A license from the California Department of Consumers Affairs, can usually perform any needed work. In unusual circumstances, such as redesigning a storm drain system or preparing



engineering plans for the replacement of a storm drain, you may need the assistance of a civil engineer. When hiring a contractor, get three or more bids whenever possible.

Check references and verify the license of the contractor you select. The number for the California Department of Consumer Affairs is 1-800-321-2752.

Remember, permits are required to ensure drainage work is properly designed and to prevent projects that might adversely affect drainage on your property or your neighbor's property. You can apply for a permit by contacting the County's Permit Center at 925-674-7744.

When it's not your problem

Even when you do your part, things sometimes happen. If the water is rising and property is threatened, take interim action to protect your home by digging ditches or building berms to help channel floodwaters.

If this is not possible, use sandbags and plastic sheeting to seal openings to your home. These can be purchased from your local hardware or building materials store. Pumps, if necessary, can be obtained at an equipment rental company.

Ask neighbors who have had similar work done to recommend a contractor who can assist you.

If the flooding is caused by a public road cross culvert, call the County Public Works Department, Maintenance Division, at 925-313-7000.

If you believe the fault lies in the public sewer system, contact ISD's 24-hour emergency line at 925-625-2279.

Drainage and flooding glossary

Inlet: Usually a round or square concrete structure that is even with or slightly below the ground surface which allows stormwater to enter the drainpipe. Inlets usually are covered with a metal grate to screen out leaves and debris and protect animals and children from falling into the drainpipe.

Manhole: A round or square concrete structure that provides workers access to clean out and maintain storm drainpipes. These often have a round metal cover, but older ones may have a wooden cover.