

When poorly treated sewage is discharged into our waterways there can be serious consequences for the entire community. For example:

- 1 Drinking water supplies are threatened, leading to health emergencies and the resulting concern by citizens.
- 2 Local waterways become polluted with germs and toxic chemicals, rendering them unsafe for swimming, fishing and boating.
- 3 Community growth and development are restricted, causing a decline in land values and erosion of the tax base.
- 4 In some cases, cities find themselves faced with a cut-off or severe reduction in Federal funds until sewage problems are corrected.

EPA is charged by Congress to protect the Nation's land, air and water systems. Under a mandate of national environmental laws focused on air and water quality, solid waste management and the control of toxic substances, pesticides, noise and radiation, the Agency strives to formulate and implement actions which lead to a compatible balance between human activities and the ability of natural systems to support and nurture life.

If you have suggestions, questions, or requests for further information, they may be directed to your nearest EPA Regional public information office.

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Water



Maintaining Clean Water





Elliott Bay, Seattle, Washington.

Recent studies reveal the startling fact that over half of the nation's wastewater treatment plants are not operating as well as they should. As a result, inadequately treated sewage is being discharged into streams, rivers and lakes. The problem, in many cases, is traced to improper operation and maintenance at the treatment plant. Poor operation and maintenance is often the result of public apathy and/or neglect. Increased public interest in well operated treatment plants can be the first step in improving performance.

Here are specific steps you as a city official or concerned citizen can take to help improve the operation and maintenance of your wastewater treatment plant:

- 1 Learn about the operation — and the problems — of your local wastewater treatment plant.
- 2 Determine whether your plant effluent meets Federal and state requirements.
- 3 Decide what your needs are.
- 4 Consult a waste treatment specialist in your local engineering community.
- 5 Use the experience and know-how of engineering consultants, equipment manufacturers and suppliers to investigate operational problems and recommend solutions.
- 6 Examine alternative solutions for improving your plant O&M.
- 7 Compare the cost effectiveness of alternatives.
- 8 Insist on qualified managers, skilled operators, adequate equipment and sufficient operating funds.
- 9 Involve other citizens as well as the business and civic leaders of your community through an educational program about your plant.
- 10 Write for a list of technical manuals covering operation, maintenance, staffing and troubleshooting of wastewater treatment facilities.

For additional information, write:
Municipal Operation Branch (WH-596)
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Washington, D.C. 20460



Left. Treatment plant at Lake Tahoe on the California-Nevada border. Above. Technicians review procedures at Hinsdale, Illinois, treatment plant.