

For those property owners located on a stream or creek, or for those interested in creek related matters, the County has an informational publication available entitled "Caring for Our Creeks." This publication describes the signs of a healthy creek and the symptoms of an ailing creek. It also describes steps property owners can take to help prevent erosion, improve water quality, and protect property in the event of flooding. This publication is available, free of charge, by contacting the County Public Works Department at (925) 313-2000.

Technical assistance and advice is also available from the Urban Creeks Council for property owners located on a stream or creek. If a property owner is concerned about erosion in their creek or would like to restore their creek, or has other creek related issues or questions, the Urban Creeks Council will provide advice at no cost to the property owner. The Urban Creeks Council will make a site visit to investigate the issue and provide technical assistance, with an emphasis on using natural, soil-bioengineering solutions whenever possible, to the property owner to help resolve the issue. The Urban Creeks Council can be reached at (510) 540-6669.

### Hours

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

### Phone Numbers

Main Number:	(925) 313-2000
Fax Number:	313-2333
Administrative Services Division:	313-2204
Buchanan Airport:	681-4200
Byron Airport:	634-0147
Capital Projects:	313-2102
County Clean Water Program:	313-2360
Custodial:	313-7096
Design/Construction Division:	313-2320
Engineering Services Division:	313-2170
Environmental Services:	313-2366
Facilities Maintenance:	313-7052
Finance Division:	313-2344
Fleet Services:	313-7021
Flood Control District:	313-2270
Information Technology Division:	313-2261
Kids at Work:	313-2380
Maintenance Division:	313-7000
Materials Management:	313-7078
Print & Mail:	646-5521
Purchasing:	313-2157
Real Estate Division:	313-2220
Records Section:	313-2356
Special Districts Section:	313-2160
Transportation Engineering Division:	313-2370
Traffic Section:	313-2187
Watershed Program:	313-2392

### Website

[www.cccpublicworks.org](http://www.cccpublicworks.org)



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July 2015

# Preventative Drainage Maintenance



*Contra Costa  
County  
Public Works  
Department*

*255 Glacier Dr.  
Martinez, CA  
(925) 313-2000*

*Julia R. Bueren, Director*

Deputy Directors

- *Brian M. Balbas*
- *Stephen Kowalewski*
- *Stephen Silveira*
- *Joe Yee*

The County is asking for your help in managing your community's drainage system this winter. Many problems occur during the winter when debris accumulates in creeks, streams, and ditches. This debris can be swept away by rainstorms and can block downstream drainage facilities causing storm water to overflow into the street and onto private properties that are below street level. Similar problems are encountered in private yards where creeks and ditches flow into pipes under lawns and other improved surfaces.

While we can't stop the rain, it is possible to control, to a degree, the accumulation of debris and sediment in drainage channels and to reduce the potential for flooding. Some of the debris results from the natural processes of decay and erosion. Other debris, such as lawn clippings and brush cuttings, is generated by human activity.

### **What can you do?**

You can help prevent potential flooding by taking the following precautions: Throughout each fall, and especially before the first winter rain, check all drainage channels, driveway culverts and other drainage pipes, ditches, and swales on and around your property and remove any debris and sediment that could cause blockages.

Each fall, check to see that all drainage pipes within or adjacent to your property have unobstructed entrances and exits. Clear any debris and silt to ensure free passage of storm runoff.

If your property is located in an unincorporated area of the county and you are unsure of your responsibility regarding the maintenance of a particular drainage facility on or near your property, call the County Public Works Department at (925) 313-7000. If your property is located within the city limits, please call the city Public Works or Engineering Department.

The County has the maintenance responsibility for: (1) drainage pipes within the public road right-of-way which carry water from one side of the street to the other, and; (2) drainage pipes within an easement offered to and accepted by the County for maintenance purposes. All other drainage facilities are the responsibility of the private property owner to maintain.

The County Ordinance Code includes provisions that require a property owner to obtain a permit before doing work that would affect the flow of storm waters or existing drainage patterns. Permits are required for any work that would impair, impede, redirect or otherwise affect the existing flow of storm waters, or other waters.

To construct, alter or repair a watercourse; to excavate, grade or otherwise alter the surface of land so as to affect the capacity of a defined drainage channel.

To destroy or significantly alter vegetation at or near a watercourse.

To commit any act within any easement dedicated for drainage purposes that would impair the easements' use.

While debris cleanup is a maintenance activity that does not normally require any special permits, please be aware that if you plan to use mechanical equipment (tractor, backhoe, etc.) to do the clean up, or if you plan in any way to alter an existing drainage channel (alteration could be in the form of a slide repair, a fill, a redirection of a channel, etc.), you may need a permit from the California Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Regional Water Quality Control Board, in addition to a permit from the County. Again, if in doubt, do not hesitate to call (925) 313-7000.