

Is Sausal Creek Safe?

Why is Sausal Creek in Dimond Canyon posted for contamination? Is it safe to go in the creek? NO! is the short answer. Dangerous levels of bacteria have recently been present in the creek. Due to the heavy rains and one clogged sewer line, there was an accidental discharge of sewage into Sausal Creek in mid-March. The discharge was almost directly under the Leimert Bridge.

Good neighbor Andy Haney, who lives just behind Rocky's Market on Arden Place, walks the creek trails nearly every day. He noticed a strong sewage smell and bluish liquid running down to the creek from behind his house. Andy called EBMUD. EBMUD told him that they only deal with drinking water and that the sewage problem belonged to the city's sewer department. EBMUD then thoughtfully forwarded Mr. Haney's information to the city. The city responded to EBMUD's report immediately. Andy reports that workers descended on the site, and it was fixed by the next day.



What caused the problem? A sewer line was blocked, so the sewage flowed out of the sewage line cover and down into the creek. The city sewer department corrected the problem on March 20, and our associate at the EPA in Richmond, Dr. Andy Lincoff, has reported that levels of *E. coli*, which are an indicator of raw sewage, appear to be coming down.

The creek must remain posted until the city samples the creek again. Hopefully results will be available soon. When the signs come down, the creek is safe once again.

Do you smell sewage while walking by the creek or in your neighborhood? Submit a service request to the City of Oakland: <http://www2.oaklandnet.com/Government/o/PWA/Connect/ReportaProblem/index.htm> You will get a number for your complaint, and you can check back to find out what progress has been made. The city will notify you when the issue is closed.

When you file a complaint, please also notify FOSC by sending an email to coordinator@sausalcreek.org. That way we will be able to keep track of all of these incidents.

--Kathleen Harris