

General

**Steve Holmes**

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**From:** Betsy S Nichols [bsn@exchange.win.lanl.gov]  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 02, 2004 12:30 PM  
**To:** SvH (E-mail)  
**Subject:** FW: LANL-ALL711: Unallowed Discharge to the LANL Sewer System

Interesting. The first surge of inappropriate chemicals came right as we were starting the stand-down. Were people getting rid of stuff because they knew the safety people would be coming by?

Love, b

-----Original Message-----

**From:** owner-sss-all@maillist.lanl.gov [mailto:owner-sss-all@maillist.lanl.gov] **On Behalf Of** Distributions  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 02, 2004 12:09 PM  
**To:** lanl-all@lanl.gov  
**Subject:** LANL-ALL711: Unallowed Discharge to the LANL Sewer System

To/MS: LANL All  
From/MS: Scott Gibbs, ADO, A104  
Phone/Fax: 7-0079/Fax 5-1812  
Symbol: AD-Ops:04-101  
Date: August 31, 2004

**Subject: Unallowed Discharges to the LANL Sewer System**

For the past six weeks, Los Alamos National Laboratory's employees at the solid wastewater treatment plant have been struggling to keep the biomass from dying due to inappropriate discharges of chemicals or solutions into drains that are connected to the sewer plant. The biomass is made up of bacteria and microorganisms such as ciliates, flagellates, and amoeboids that are essential to the successful operation of the Laboratory's sanitary wastewater facility, and are key to the health and quality of the sanitary wastewater treatment.

Unless so labeled, everything flushed down a toilet, or put down a drain, goes to the sanitary wastewater treatment facility. Laboratory drains are for waste that is within the facility's approved Waste Acceptance Criteria only and not for other chemicals.

The latest discharge received by the sewage treatment plant resulted in the largest die-off of the biomass since the plant became operational in 1992. A total biomass die-off could result in a violation of federal and state wastewater discharge limits and fines of up to \$100,000 per day. Any individuals who may



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have caused the event could also be subject to civil and criminal fines.

The first surge of inappropriate chemicals was during the timeframe of Saturday, July 17. Within the next couple of days, a significant die-off of the plant biomass, including active amoeba, ciliate and rotifer populations were observed. During the first two weeks of August the plant had recovered most organisms and had returned to normal operations. But on August 19 and the 26, the biomass had again abruptly been killed off and the sewage treatment plant was forced to reseed the organisms using sludge from a neighboring sludge plant.

Sanitary waste lines that are connected to the sewer are authorized for only solid-wastewater-system required discharges. Employees can ask their assigned Waste Management Coordinators (WMC) for help in determining the appropriate pathway for any liquid wastes. To access the allowable, acceptable quantities and concentrations of chemicals for disposal, the waste acceptance criteria can be found at the following link:  
[http://swo.lanl.gov/FMU-64\\_Controlled\\_Documents/Waste%20Acceptance%20Criteria/PLAN-WASTEMGMT-002,R.4%20LANL%20Waste%20Acceptance%20Criteria.pdf](http://swo.lanl.gov/FMU-64_Controlled_Documents/Waste%20Acceptance%20Criteria/PLAN-WASTEMGMT-002,R.4%20LANL%20Waste%20Acceptance%20Criteria.pdf)

Employees are reminded not to put something down the drain that they wouldn't normally flush down the toilet or rinse down the kitchen sink at home. Assistance is available at KSL-Utilities, 5-7855; Facilities and Waste Operations Utilities and Infrastructure Group (UI), 5-6002; and Risk Reduction and Environmental Stewardship Water Quality and Hydrology Group (WQH) at 5-8135.