Discover the city under the City!
Our wastewater treatment plant tours are currently on hold due to extensive construction underway. For now, we hope you will view some of our exciting videos to learn more about our amazing sewer system at sfwater.org/ssip/tours

San Francisco’s Wastewater Treatment Facilities

Serving over 800,000 customers, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) owns and operates San Francisco’s combined sewer system, which collects and treats both sewage and stormwater runoff.

On a typical day, a vast network of pipes creates a “city under the City” that transports and delivers San Francisco’s wastewater to one of our two local treatment plants: the Southeast Treatment Plant or the Oceanside Treatment Plant. During a storm North Point Wet-Weather Facility is activated to treat additional flow. Each treatment facility plays an integral role in handling and treating the City’s flows before being discharged into the San Francisco Bay or the Pacific Ocean.

Stormwater enters the combined sewer system through the thousands of catch basins along the street. Since most of San Francisco is paved over, the rainwater that falls from the skies usually ends up in our sewers. Each non-rainy day an average of 70 million gallons of wastewater is collected and transported to one of the two treatment plants. When it rains, our wastewater system can collect and treat up to 575 million gallons a day (MGD).

ABOUT THE SSIP: The SSIP is a 20-year, citywide investment to upgrade our aging infrastructure to ensure a reliable, sustainable, and siesmically safe sewer system now and into the future.
Oceanside Treatment Plant

Located on the Great Highway between the San Francisco Zoo and Lake Merced, the Oceanside Water Pollution Control Treatment Plant (OSP) is one of a few plants in the United States built largely underground. The OSP is San Francisco’s youngest wastewater facility providing all-weather wastewater treatment of flows from the Westside of the City, which ranges from the Presidio to Lake Merced. On an average day, the plant can treat 15 million gallons per day (MGD); during rain storms, the wet-weather treatment capacity is 175 MGD, which includes an outfall that discharges 4 miles into the ocean.

Needed Plant Improvements Underway

Although the OSP is the most recently constructed of the City’s three treatment facilities, the harsh marine environment surrounding the facility makes it vulnerable to accelerated corrosion. The facilities require replacement or upgrades to maintain efficient operation and seismic reliability and to extend the useful life of the equipment. In addition, the plant must undergo other performance upgrades to ensure reliable and safe operation during all weather conditions.

Through the SSIP, upgrades to the OSP include:

- Improved grit (sand) removal during pre-treatment
- Upgraded electrical and instrumentation systems
- Enhanced corrosion control
- Replacement of gas handling facilities
- Structural and seismic improvements

These infrastructure improvements focus on increasing system reliability by replacing equipment and utilizing the latest technology to make the treatment process more efficient. OSP facilities will be seismically upgraded and systems will be brought up to current standards that protect public health and the environment. The treatment plants will also have major odor control upgrades, which will reduce negative impacts to the surrounding community.