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Why is Pretreatment Needed?

The Alderwood Water & Wastewater District (the District) currently serves 1,150 commercial connections to the collection system of which approximately 350 are food service establishments. The remaining 800 are comprised of various businesses including but not limited to cleaners and laundries, gas stations and car washes, pharmaceutical research and manufacturing, genome research, electronic boards and other manufacturers. The discharges from these facilities are mixed with domestic sewage from over 40,000 residences, which include grease from the kitchens, shampoos, conditioners, soaps, and other products that are poured down the drain or flushed down the toilet. As these substances mix they create a hodgepodge of chemicals that are delivered to the wastewater treatment plants through 410 miles of sewer piping. Many of these substances, either alone or combined with other substances, can create a hazardous environment for the staff that maintain the sewer lines as well as the operators at the treatment plants. They can also cause damage to the collection system and can create a public hazard.

The District has developed and instituted limits on hazardous substances that can be discharged by industrial and commercial users. Our pretreatment staff monitors and inspects these facilities regularly to ensure that the waste they discharge meets the limitations, and is compatible with the collection system and the microbiology at the wastewater treatment plants, and does not present a hazard to the maintenance crews or become a hazard to the public.