

# Information for Property Owners



## CITY HALL

501 Primrose Avenue  
Burlingame, CA. 94010

Tel. (650) 558-7200

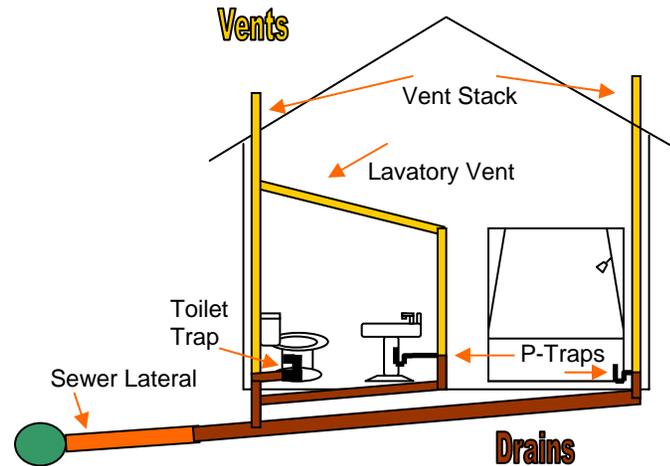
[www.burlingame.org](http://www.burlingame.org)

## CORPORATION YARD

1361 N. Carolan Avenue  
Burlingame, CA. 94010

Tel. (650) 558-7670

# Traps & Vents:



The City of Burlingame is a public agency providing wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal services to the cities of Burlingame, Hillsborough and the County of San Mateo.

## Try This Experiment To See Why Airflow Is Required To Carry Wastewater & Odors Away

Fill a clear glass with water to an inch from the top.



Place a straw into the water until you touch the bottom of the glass.



Slowly raise the straw, you will notice that water stays in the glass.

Place the straw in the glass and touch bottom again.



Place your thumb over the top of the straw and raise it again.

When your thumb blocks the end of the straw, water stays trapped in it.



Remove your thumb from the top of the straw, and the water drains back into the glass.

You just proved that your vents must remain clear for wastewater to drain away!

## Maintain Your Traps & Vents For A Healthy Sewer System

**Homes and businesses both have plumbing systems that are made up of vents and drains.** Drains begin at each fixture and connect into a larger network of pipes to carry the water used in sinks, toilets, tubs, etc. into the sanitary sewer system.

**Traps** are typically visible under sinks, and are similar to the drawing at right. Although you can't see every trap, each drain in your building should have one.

Water resting at the bottom of this "U" shaped device creates a constant seal between the fixture and the sanitary sewer system.

Properly functioning traps are a critical element of the plumbing system and are what keeps offensive and potentially harmful fumes generated in the sewer from entering your home or business.

**Vents** serve several equally important purposes. They provide a means for the naturally occurring fumes from the sewer to exit through the vents on your roof and keep your pipes flowing freely. If a vent is plugged, airflow is restricted and drains will not function correctly. You must have adequate venting because as water leaves, it is replaced with air; without airflow, drains will not function properly and will move slowly. (See illustration on back flap)

## Tips For Preventative Maintenance – Keep Your Trap Full Of Water!

Infrequently used plumbing facilities such as guest bathrooms will experience a loss of seal at the fixtures through evaporation. But you can solve this problem by periodically running a little water into each trap on a monthly basis. This simple step keeps the trap full and working properly.

You should also **clean your vent system annually**. If you have tree limbs, branches etc. overhanging your roof, cut them back well away from the vents. Leaves and other types of debris can fall into the vents and block the circulation of air that is critical to ensuring the proper operation of the drains in your building. Spiders or birds can build nests that block your vents too.

**Caution:** Standing on your roof to do this maintenance can be hazardous! Be sure that you are informed of proper procedures and take safety precautions.

**Vents** that are functioning properly will allow pressure created in the sewer system during USD's normal cleaning operations to escape correctly.

