



# H.R. LaBounty Safety Awards Nomination Form

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## **Nomination Deadlines:**

**Spring Awards: February 1, 2021**

**Fall Awards: September 1, 2021**

**Agency:** South Coast Water District

**Project/Initiative Title:** Root Intrusion Notification System

Implementation Date: 2015

Cost to Implement: Approx. \$100

Staff Time Required: 50 - 100 hours annually

Number of Employees/Facilities Impacted: Sanitary Operations Dept.

## **Employee/Department/Committee Nominated:**

Name(s): Sanitary Operations Department

Job Title/Department: Sanitary Operations Department

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## Nomination Summary

*Write a brief summary of your project/initiative. Clearly state the problem/hazard recognized by the nominee and the specific reasons that they initiated corrective action.*

Each year the District video inspects a portion of their sewer main lines with the entire sewer main line system being inspected no less than every 5 years. When these inspections show root intrusions at the customer's lateral, the District has a process in place for contacting the customer and letting them know of the blockage. This process is an outreach to hopefully avoid sewer spill overflows by making the customer aware of the problem.

*Describe the specific actions taken to resolve the problem(s) or challenge(s). Share the best practices that made this initiative successful for the agency and its impact.*

As the District is constantly reviewing the footage of the video inspected sewer lines, it made a decision to develop a Root Intrusion Notification system. Pictures of blockages are sent from the Sanitary Operations Crew to the District's Administrative Services Department who creates a letter and mails it with the photo(s) to the customer encouraging them to contact a plumber to investigate the problem. This proactive approach was instituted to hopefully bring notice to potential problems and have them addressed.

*State whether the hazard was reduced with engineering controls, introduced a new administrative or work procedure, or relied on personal protective equipment to solve the problem.*

The hazard of a potential sewer spill was reduced with an administrative control of notifying the homeowner of a potential blockage.

*Describe any extraordinary circumstances that made this nominee's safety accomplishments significant. Describe whether the nominee influenced safety in the workplace, encouraged employee participation in safety efforts, obtained organizational "buy in" to implement the solution.*

This safety implementation is a two fold benefit to both the homeowner who would otherwise be unaware of the problem and also to the District by reducing the potential for a sewer spill. South Coast Water District is a coastal water district located in Laguna Beach along the coastline of the Pacific Ocean. We make every effort to protect the environmentally sensitive area in which we serve.

*Describe whether the project/initiative addressed a hazard or exposure included in the JPIA Commitment to Excellence Program.*

- Office/Field Ergonomics
- Vehicle Operations
- Slip/trip/falls – falls from heights
- Other: Communication and notification to customers

*List and attach any supporting materials that you feel are important for the reviewers to gain a complete picture of the nomination. Digital photos, supporting documentation, sample forms, etc.*



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**Nominated by:** Jody Brennan

**Date:** January 8, 2021

**General Manager:** Rick Shintaku

**Date:** January 8, 2021

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Please email this form with supporting documents and digital photos (jpg) to [tlofinq@acwajpia.com](mailto:tlofinq@acwajpia.com).

**SOUTH COAST  
WATER DISTRICT**  
*Partnering With The Community*



September 21, 2020

Rita McCoy  
25201 Yacht Dr  
Dana Point CA 92629

**Subject: Root Intrusion into Sewer Line**  
**Property Address: 25201 Yacht Dr**

Dear Homeowner:

South Coast Water District is required to address adverse conditions caused by roots in public and private sewer lines. While the District was video inspecting its sewer lines, a significant amount of tree roots protruding from your private sewer line were observed; attached is a photo for your reference.

Private sewer lines are the responsibility of individual homeowners to maintain and repair; the District, however, endeavors to contact homeowners as a courtesy if we observe potential obstructions in the sewer lines. The roots in your private sewer line could obstruct the flow of wastewater and cause sewage to back up into your home and onto your property. This could result in thousands of dollars of clean up and repair costs as well as a significant personal inconvenience. It could also result in a sewer spill that would flow into the street, storm drains, and potentially the beaches and ocean.

It is recommended that you contact a licensed plumber to remove the roots in your private sewer line. With the assistance of a plumber, you can devise a regular preventative maintenance repair program that would prevent future blockages to your sewer line. **It is imperative that you notify us prior to cleaning your line, since the plumber may push the roots from your line into our system during the cleaning process.** During normal business hours, Monday-Thursday 7:00 am to 5:30 pm, please notify Jimmy Gomez, our Private Sewer Line Outreach Program Coordinator, at (949) 395-3764. After hours, please notify our on-call Duty Personnel at (949) 274-5110. The District will send a crew to set a trap downstream to catch the debris cleared from your private lateral. This will help in preventing a potential blockage downstream from your house.

We will contact you in **30** days to see your progress in eliminating the roots observed growing into the District's system from your private sewer line.

Thank you for your support in keeping sewer lines clear and ocean water clean.

Sincerely,

Joseph N. McDivitt  
Chief Operations Officer

Enclosed: Photo of lateral connection to sewer main

*Mailing Address: P.O. Box 30205, Laguna Niguel, CA 92607-0205*

*Street Address: 31592 West Street, Laguna Beach, CA 92651*

*Fax: (949) 499-4256 Phone: (949) 499-4555*



# Observations

Distance	Dir.	ForDista	From/To	Code	Modifier	Rating	Remarks
3.5 ft.	D		10 /	TFA			<b>MEDIUM ROOTS ADDRESS 25201 YACHT DR. MH D529-D530 I-9</b>

