



Oro Loma Sanitary District
2655 Grant Avenue
San Lorenzo, CA 94580

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**Oro Loma
Pays Off
All
Debt**

Spotlight on Excellence Sara Burke

You could say that wastewater treatment is a family business for Sara Burke—her husband works as a chemist at a water pollution control plant, and one of her brothers is a wastewater treatment plant operator.



Sara was working for a newspaper after receiving her BA in Communications when another brother, who is the director of a biotech firm, suggested she go back to college for a degree in science. Sara took his advice and acquired her second degree, a BS in microbiology. This led Sara to her own career in wastewater, which she has been pursuing for the past six years, first with a private company, then with South Bayside System Authority. All these years, Sara has used her degree in science to work as a wastewater laboratory analyst. Her involvement and efforts in the field were recognized in 2008, when Sara received the “Laboratory Person of the Year Award” from the California Water Environment Association.

Now at Oro Loma, Sara replaces Al Camisa, who retired as the District’s chemist after 40 years. In addition to monitoring the solids’ content at various stages in the wastewater treatment process to make sure that the plant is producing safe effluent, Sara ensures that all the sampling is done to comply with the District’s stringent National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit requirements.

Before applying for the position, Sara made sure she wanted to work at the District, by requesting a tour of the plant. That same day, impressed with what she saw, Sara submitted her application for Oro Loma’s vacant chemist position.

As a one-person lab, Sara has to handle all aspects of the chemist’s job, from sample collection to testing and reporting. She feels confident in her ability, and has the support of the plant personnel. Her goal is to maintain an efficient lab, and she sees her future continuing with the District.

In her free time, Sara likes to cook, bike, and play bocce ball.

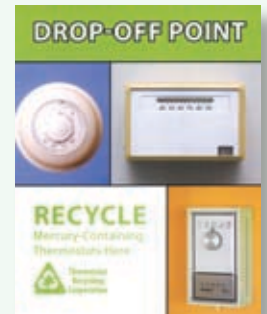
POLLUTION PREVENTION

Mercury Switch Thermostat Recycling

Many older mechanical thermostats contain one or more mercury switches. Each of these switches contains approximately 2.5 grams of mercury. If mercury thermostats are thrown in the trash, mercury ends up in the landfill, where it can contaminate groundwater, streams, and the Bay.

Working through the Thermostat Recycling Corporation, Oro Loma now accepts for recycling thermostats that contain mercury. Residents of the District can bring their thermostats to the Grant Avenue office during normal business hours for proper handling and disposal. Note that this special program is only for thermostats that contain mercury. Thermometers will not be accepted.

To find out if your thermostat uses a mercury switch, carefully remove the cover of the thermostat. If it contains mercury, you will see a small glass tube with silver metallic liquid attached to the thermostat.



Dental Amalgam Program

Dental amalgam fillings contain up to 50% mercury, in addition to smaller quantities of silver, zinc, copper, and tin. Amalgam waste generated at dental offices poses a particular pollution concern for San Francisco Bay.

Oro Loma’s updated Pretreatment Ordinance includes specific requirements for handling amalgam waste. Key changes to those regulations require dentists that remove or replace amalgam fillings to practice best management practices for amalgam handling and install an ISO 11143 certified amalgam separator device.



Dental offices should download and review the OLSD Dental Program Brochure from www.roloma.org. A training flyer and other information is available at <http://www.baywise.org>.