

Landscaping, Gardening, and Pool Maintenance

Best Management Practices for the Construction Industry



Who should use this brochure?

- Landscapers
- Gardeners
- Swimming pool/spa service and repair workers
- General contractors
- Home builders
- Developers
- Homeowners

Storm Drain Pollution Prevention: It's Up to Us

In San Mateo County, storm drains transport water directly to local creeks, San Francisco Bay and the Pacific Ocean without treatment. Stormwater pollution is a serious problem for wildlife dependent on our waterways and for the people who live near polluted streams or baylands. Some common sources of this pollution include spilled oil, fuel, and fluids from vehicles and heavy equipment; construction debris; sediment created by erosion; landscaping runoff containing pesticides or weed killers; and materials such as used motor oil, antifreeze, and paint products that people pour or spill into a street or storm drain.

All of the cities in San Mateo County have joined together with San Mateo County and the City/County Association of Governments (C/CAG) to educate local residents and businesses and fight stormwater pollution. Join us, by following the practices described in this pamphlet.

What Can You Do?

General Business Practices

- Protect stockpiles of landscaping materials from wind and rain by storing them under tarps all year-round
- Stack bagged materials on pallets and under cover
- Store pesticides, fertilizers, and other chemicals indoors or in a shed or storage cabinet.
- Schedule grading and excavation projects during dry weather.
- Use temporary check dams or ditches to divert runoff away from storm drains.
- Protect storm drains with sandbags or other sediment controls.
- Provide erosion control for areas of exposed soil using vegetation or blankets.

Storm Drain Pollution from Landscaping and Swimming Pool Maintenance

Many landscaping activities expose soils and increase the likelihood that earth and garden chemicals will run off into the storm drains during irrigation or when it rains. Swimming pool water containing chlorine and copper-based algaecides should never be discharged to storm drains. These chemicals are toxic to aquatic life.

Landscaping/Garden Maintenance

- Discontinue application of any erodible landscape material within 2 days before a forecast rain event or during wet weather
- Collect lawn and garden clippings, pruning waste, and tree trimmings. Chip if necessary, and compost.
- Do not blow or rake leaves, etc. into the street, or place yard waste in gutters or on dirt shoulders.
- In communities with curbside pick-up of yard waste, place clippings and pruning waste at the curb in approved bags or containers. Or, take to a landfill that composts yard waste. No curbside pickup of yard waste is available for commercial properties.
- Use pesticides sparingly, and only as a last resort, according to instructions on the label. Rinse empty containers, and use rinsewater as product. Dispose of rinsed, empty containers in the trash.
- Dispose of unused pesticides as hazardous waste.

Pool/Fountain/Spa Maintenance

Draining pools or spas

When it's time to drain a pool, spa, or fountain, please be sure to call your local wastewater treatment plant before you start for further guidance on flow rate restrictions, backflow prevention, and handling special cleaning waste (such as acid wash). Discharge flows should be kept to the low levels typically possible through a garden hose. Higher flow rates may be prohibited by local ordinance.

- Never discharge pool or spa water to a street or storm drain; discharge to a sanitary sewer cleanout if permitted to do so.
- If possible, when emptying a pool or spa, let chlorine dissipate for 5 to 7 days and then recycle/reuse water by draining it gradually onto a landscaped area. Water must be tested to ensure no chlorine is present.
- Prevent backflow if draining a pool to the sanitary sewer by maintaining an "air gap" between the discharge line and the sewer line (do not seal the connection between the hose and sewer line).
- Provide drip pans or buckets beneath drain pipe connections to catch leaks. This will be especially pertinent if pool or spa water that has not been dechlorinated is pumped through piping to a discharge location.
- Do not use copper-based algaecides. Control algae with chlorine or other alternatives, such as sodium bromide.

Filter Cleaning

- Never clean a filter in the street or near a storm drain. Rinse cartridge and diatomaceous earth filters onto a dirt area, and spade filter residue into soil. Dispose of spent diatomaceous earth in the garbage.
- If there is no suitable dirt area, call your local wastewater treatment plant for instructions on discharging filter backwash or rinsewater to the sanitary sewer.

Small Business Hazardous Waste Disposal Program

Businesses that generate less than 27 gallons or 220 pounds of hazardous waste per month are eligible to use San Mateo County's Very Small Quantity Generator Program. Call (650) 655-6217 for a quote, more information or guidance on disposal.

This brochure is one in a series of pamphlets describing storm drain pollution prevention measures for specific types of construction industry activities. Other pamphlets include:

General Construction and Site Supervision

Fresh Concrete and Mortar Application

Painting and Application of Solvents and Adhesives

Roadwork and Paving

Earth-Moving and Dewatering Activities

Heavy Equipment Operation



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Spill Response Agencies:-

Non-emergency calls:

1. San Mateo County Environmental Health Division's Household Hazardous Waste Hotline includes information for businesses: (650) 363-4718
2. For stormwater pollution prevention information and additional brochures visit the San Mateo Countywide Water Pollution Prevention Program's web site at www.flowstobay.org or contact local stormwater programs (see list below).

Town of Atherton	(650) 752-0541
City of Belmont	(650) 595-7425
City of Brisbane	(415) 508-2130
City of Burlingame	(650) 558-7230
Town of Colma	(650) 757-8888
City of Daly City	(650) 991-8200
City of East Palo Alto	(650) 853-3197
City of Foster City	(650) 286-3270
City of Half Moon Bay	(650) 726-8260
Town of Hillsborough	(650) 375-7411
City of Menlo Park	(650) 330-6740
City of Millbrae	(650) 259-2339
City of Pacifica	(650) 738-3767
Town of Portola Valley	(650) 851-1700
City of Redwood City	(650) 780-7464
City of San Bruno	(650) 616-7160
City of San Carlos	(650) 802-4261
City of San Mateo	(650) 522-7350
City of S. San Francisco	(650) 877-8555
Town of Woodside	(650) 851-6790
County of San Mateo	(650) 599-7310

3. San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board: (510) 622-2300

Emergency calls only:

1. Dial 911
2. Governor's Office of Emergency Services Warning Center (24 hours): 1-800-852-7550