

Graffiti is commonly removed by painting over or pressure washing surfaces. When pollutants from graffiti removal activities, such as wash waters, paint, solvents, sediment, and grit, enter storm drain inlets, they flow through the storm drain system directly into creeks, the Bay, and Ocean, without any cleaning or filtering. Staff that remove graffiti can stop stormwater pollution through best management practices (BMPs), which ensure that pollutants stay out of local waterways.

KEEP WASH WATERS, PAINT, AND CLEANING COMPOUNDS OUT OF THE GUTTER AND STORM DRAINS

Only rain water is allowed down storm drains.



What about non-toxic cleaning products?

Cleaning products labeled “non- toxic” can still harm fish and wildlife if they enter a storm drain. Make sure to contact local programs, divert, and collect all wash water, as appropriate. Only rain down the storm drain.



*Do not allow paint or water used for
cleaning to enter the storm drains.*

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

BMPs for Painting Over Graffiti

- ☐ Use the least toxic materials available (e.g., water-based paints) and inspect equipment for leaks prior to painting.
- ☐ Transport paint in containers with secure lids.
- ☐ Tighten all hoses and connections.
- ☐ Do not overfill paint container.
- ☐ Cover nearby storm drain inlets prior to painting.
- ☐ Do not mix, transfer, or load paint near storm drain inlets.
- ☐ Dispose of unused paint at an appropriate household hazardous waste disposal facility.
- ☐ Learn about hazardous waste and proper disposal options by contacting San Mateo County HHW at (650) 372-6200 or visit www.smchealth.org/hhw to learn more.
- ☐ Collect waste from cleaning equipment or brushes and put into a container with a secure lid for transport to be reused, recycled, or disposed of properly. Never rinse into a street, gutter, storm drain, or stream.

BMPs for Pressure Washing

- ☐ If water must be used, use berms or other protective barriers to isolate polluted areas from storm drain inlets.
- ☐ Collect and dispose of wash water properly and do not allow water used for cleaning to enter storm drains.

BMPs for Sand Blasting

- ☐ Cover nearby storm drain inlets prior to starting work. Tarps and similar control measures should be used to prevent spills or material drift from being deposited into storm water drainage system or watercourses.
- ☐ Use a sander with a vacuum filter bag.
- ☐ Collect solid waste in a container for transport to be recycled or disposed of properly.
- ☐ Clean up by sweeping or vacuuming thoroughly, and/or by using absorbent. Properly dispose of the absorbent.
- ☐ Collect wash water in a tank and pump to the sanitary sewer (after filtering), or dispose as hazardous waste, as directed by the local wastewater agency.

General Guidance and Good Housekeeping

- ❑ Schedule graffiti removal activities during dry weather.
- ❑ Cover the storm drains (e.g., with tarp, drain mat, or other control measures) prior to removing graffiti from walls, signs, sidewalks, or other structures. This prevents spills of solvents, paint waste, wash water, or material drift from entering storm drains.
- ❑ If using solvent cleaners, call the local wastewater agency before discharging wash water to the sanitary sewer to determine if they are acceptable for discharge.
- ❑ Consider using a waterless and non-toxic chemical cleaning method for graffiti removal (e.g., gels or spray compounds).
- ❑ Remove storm drain covers when job is complete.

How to Collect Wash Water

If a graffiti abatement method generates wash water containing a cleaning compound (i.e., high pressure washing with a cleaning compound), contain the wash area so that water does not drain down streets and gutters. Use a wet-vac or small pump and hose to direct wash water to a tank or sanitary sewer discharge point.

Call the local wastewater agency before discharging wash water to the sanitary sewer.

- ❑ Collect and dispose of non-hazardous wash waters in sanitary sewer cleanouts by vacuuming/pumping.
- ❑ Cleaning solutions that cannot be recycled may need to be disposed of as hazardous waste. Learn more at: www.smchealth.org/hhw.

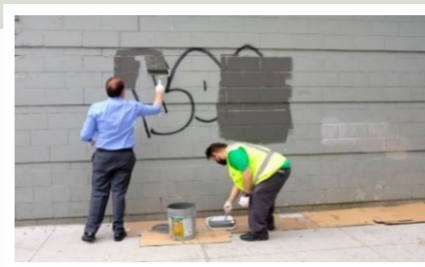
Implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) helps prevent stormwater pollution.

STORM DRAIN VS. SANITARY SEWERS:

Does your staff know the difference?

All **outdoor drains** are storm drains. Pollution that enters storm drains flows directly to creeks and San Francisco Bay or the Ocean, not treated or properly cleaned.

Indoor drains (such as sink, toilet, mop sink, kitchen floor drain) lead to the sanitary sewer system, which is connected to a wastewater treatment system.



Barriers ensure that wash waters are kept OUT of storm drains during graffiti removal activities, including painting over and power washing events.

LOCAL STORMWATER AGENCIES:

Atherton..... (650) 752-0555
 Belmont..... (650) 637-2972
 Brisbane..... (415) 508-2130
 Burlingame..... (650) 342-3727
 Colma..... (650) 757-8888
 Daly City..... (650) 991-8208
 East Palo Alto..... (650) 372-3189

Foster City..... (650) 286-3270
 Half Moon Bay..... (650) 726-7177
 Hillsborough..... (650) 375-7444
 Menlo Park..... (650) 330-6750
 Millbrae..... (650) 259-2392
 Pacifica..... (650) 738-3767
 Portola Valley..... (650) 851-1700

Redwood City..... (650) 780-7464
 San Bruno..... (650) 616-7020
 San Carlos..... (650) 802-4212
 San Mateo..... (650) 522-7349
 San Mateo County..... (650) 372-6200
 South San Francisco..... (650) 877-8555
 Woodside..... (650) 851-6790