

Irrigation Runoff



Irrigation runoff may contain pollutants such as pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, yard waste and sediment that can be hazardous to San Diego residents and harmful to our environment. Runoff can also serve as a transport mechanism for other pollutants already on the ground or in the curb gutter. Irrigation runoff entering the storm drain system is an illicit discharge so everyone should take steps to prevent over-watering of lawns.

Irrigation Considerations

Urban runoff begins when yards and landscaped areas are over-irrigated. Where irrigation systems are used, regular maintenance and visual observation of the system shall be performed to prevent overspray, leaks and other problems that result in runoff to City storm drains, curbs and gutters, or any other part of the City's storm drain system. Prevent pollution by conserving water on your property.

- ◆ Water during cooler times of the day (before 10 a.m. and after 6 p.m.).
- ◆ Adjust sprinklers to stop overspray and runoff.
- ◆ Make needed repairs immediately.
- ◆ Use drip irrigation, soaker hoses or micro-spray systems.
- ◆ Use an irrigation timer to pre-set watering times.
- ◆ Use a control nozzle or similar mechanism when watering by hand.
- ◆ Switch to a water-wise landscape - native plants need less fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides and water.

For information on proper landscape watering times and conservation rebates, please visit: sandiego.gov/water/conservation.



STORMWATER REGULATIONS

It is illegal to discharge water from over-irrigation into the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) (San Diego Municipal Code §43.0304). Penalties associated with these violations can be up to \$10,000 per day per incident.

Permanent Water Conservation Restrictions

Permanent mandatory water restrictions have been in place since 2011 and apply year round, whether the City is in a drought or not. These restrictions are designed to promote water conservation as a permanent way of life in San Diego.

City of San Diego water customers must prohibit excessive irrigation and immediately correct leaks in their private water systems. The City’s regulations state that customers “shall not allow water to leave their property by drainage onto adjacent properties or public or private roadways or streets or gutters due to excessive irrigation and/or uncorrected leaks.” (SDMC §67.3803).

Customers cannot use a running hose to wash down sidewalks, driveways, parking areas, buildings, awnings, windows, tennis courts, patios or other hard surface areas – except to alleviate immediate safety or sanitation hazards. A water-efficient device, such as a commercial water broom, must be used and all wash water must be prevented from entering the storm drain system (curb gutters, streets, alleys and inlets).

Residents washing vehicles (automobiles, trucks, trailers, boats, recreational vehicles, etc.) must implement procedures to conserve water and prevent excessive runoff, such as:

- ◆ Washing vehicles at a commercial car wash.
- ◆ Washing vehicles on a lawn or pervious surface or directing water flow to a lawn or pervious area.
- ◆ Damming wash water for collection and disposal to a pervious area or to the sanitary sewer.
- ◆ Using a hose with an automatic shutoff nozzle.
- ◆ Using a hand-held water container.

For information about additional drought alert restrictions, visit: sandiego.gov/water/conservation/index.shtml

Keep Pollutants Out of Storm Drains

Many people think that when water flows into a storm drain it is treated, but the storm drain system and the sanitary sewer system are not connected. Everything that enters storm drains flows untreated directly into our creeks, rivers, bays, beaches and, ultimately, the ocean. Stormwater often contains pollutants – including chemicals, trash and vehicle fluids – all of which contaminate our beaches and harm fish and wildlife.

Whether at home or work, you can help reduce pollution and improve water quality by using the above Best Management Practices as part of your daily cleaning and maintenance routine.

