

Storm Drain Protection



Urban runoff has been identified as a potential source of pollutants - including trash, metals, sediment, chemicals and oils - and can also be a transporter of pollutants already on the ground. Urban runoff can contribute to ocean pollution if proper methods are not used to control and contain the water.

Temporarily protect storm drains from non-stormwater discharges while conducting activities such as construction, pressure washing and vehicle or equipment maintenance. Those actions could result in the cutting, grinding, sanding, painting or processing of products like wood, plastic, metal and concrete - all materials that need to be prevented from entering storm drains.

If activities cannot be fully contained, or minor failures in containment would potentially result in discharges of non-stormwater to the storm drain system, temporary measures shall be used to protect storm drains. Temporary measures may include temporary covers, sandbags or vendor products that are effective at blocking spills, debris or contaminated runoff from reaching the storm drain system.

If materials such as fluid leaks or spills, sawdust, metal shavings, litter or other debris enter a storm drain inlet, the material shall be immediately removed by using a shop vacuum, broom and pan, mop or other tool. Materials must be disposed of properly in accordance with applicable regulations.

Pollution prevention signage shall be provided for all on-site storm drain inlets and catch basins with prohibitive language (e.g., "No Dumping - Drains to Ocean"). Examples include concrete stamping, paint stenciling, signs, and ceramic or plastic tiles.

*Note that bodily entry into storm drains is considered "confined space entry," and is not recommended without adherence to applicable regulations. See the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) website for more information.
<http://www.osha.gov>

STORMWATER REGULATIONS

It is illegal to discharge pollutants into the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) without proper controls (San Diego Municipal Code §43.0304). Penalties associated with these violations can be up to \$10,000 per day per incident.



Runoff conveyed and discharged by municipal stormwater systems has been identified by local, regional and national research programs as one of the principal causes of water quality problems in urban areas such as the City of San Diego.

This runoff potentially contains a host of pollutants including trash, debris, bacteria, viruses, oil, grease, sediments, nutrients, metals and toxic chemicals.

These contaminants can adversely affect the beneficial uses of receiving creeks, coastal waters, associated wildlife habitat and public health. Urban runoff pollution is a problem during rainy seasons and also throughout the year due to urban water uses that discharge non-stormwater runoff via dry weather flows to the stormwater conveyance system.

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.

