

Preventing Stormwater Pollution

An Automotive Industry Guide

There is a big difference between a sanitary sewer and a storm drain.

The *sewer system* takes all wastewater from toilets, sinks and showers to a wastewater treatment facility, where the water is treated before it is discharged to a water body.



Storm Drain / Catch Basin

The *storm drain system*, on the other hand, collects rainwater from city streets and urban areas to prevent flooding. Unfortunately, chemicals, oil, trash and other debris that have been spilled accidentally or intentionally can also enter the storm drain system. The water from storm drains typically flows untreated to a nearby stream, river or other water body, causing water pollution.



Storm Drain Outfall

Stormwater Pollution causes erosion, habitat degradation, and poor water quality, impacting commercial and recreational fishing, swimming, and boating.

Dumping waste onto the street is a large contributor of water pollution in the country and it is against the law.

Your business can help protect the Connecticut River and other local water resources by adopting Best Management Practices (BMPs) – simple, inexpensive and environmentally friendly ways to prevent water pollution.



In most communities, dumping waste into the storm drain is punishable by fines.

Only Rain Down the Drain

- Never discharge wash water or toxic materials such as antifreeze, waste oil, used solvents, or paints to a storm drain or water body.
- Use commercial car washers, or wash vehicles on a lawn so the soapy water does not flow directly to a storm drain.
- Use biodegradable soaps.
- Develop a wash water recycling system.
- Use an oil/water separator.
- Inspect damaged vehicles for fluid leaks, and use drip pans or absorbent materials to clean up leaked materials.
- Store materials and waste such as fuels, solvents, batteries, and oils off the ground and in areas where they will not be exposed to rainwater.

Conduct a Facility Audit

- Inspect your business for illegal flow drain connections that may convey pollutants to the storm drain system or receiving waters.
- Label drains within the facility boundary to indicate whether they drain to the sewer or storm drain system. Mark these locations on a facility map.
- Review all activities to identify where Best Management Practices can be used.
- Document any corrective action taken after your audit.

Manage Vehicle Fluids

- Whenever possible, drain vehicle fluids indoors and only over concrete floors.
- Use drip pans or other containers to contain spills.
- Take precautions to prevent spills. Transfer waste fluids to a labeled waste storage container as soon as possible.
- Provide drip pans under stored vehicles and those with known leaks.
- Regularly transfer fluids from drip pans to designated waste storage areas.
- Store vehicle fluids in separate, sealed, leak-proof containers.

Train Employees On...

- The difference between the sewer and storm drain systems.
- Where facility storm drains are located.
- Pollution prevention and disposal of hazardous wastes.
- Spill response and cleanup.

Engine and Parts Cleaning

- Designate specific areas in your service bays for parts cleaning. Do not wash or rinse parts outdoors.
- Use aqueous cleaning solutions instead of solvents when ever possible. Recycle used solutions through a licensed hazardous waste hauler.
- Avoid using hose-off degreasers. Never allow runoff to enter the storm drain system. Instead, brush of loose debris and use damp rags to wipe down parts. Manage used rags through a rag service or as hazardous waste.
- Clean parts in self-contained sinks or drum units when working with solvents. Inspect part washing units daily for leaks and repair immediately.
- Allow parts to drain over the solvent sink or drum, rather than allowing the solvents to drip or spill onto the floor. Never discharge the rinse solution into the sewer system.

Body Repair and Painting

- Allow wet sanding debris to dry overnight on the shop floor and sweep or vacuum it the next day. Liquid must not be discharged to the storm drain system.
- Use sanders with an attached vacuum system to capture dust at the source.
- Conduct painting only in approved, enclosed areas equipped with vacuum hoods and filters.
- Minimize paint and thinner waste by carefully calculating paint needs based on surface area and by using the proper sprayer cup size.
- Collect water used to control over-spray or dust in the paint booth and recycle or dispose of it properly. Clean spray guns in a self-contained unit and recycle or properly dispose of the cleaning solution.
- Call MassDEP at 413-784-1100 for additional information and the permit requirements for spray booths, coatings, and emissions. For more information, visit: <http://www.epa.gov/ne/auto/index.html>.

Practice Good Housekeeping

- Use dry methods to regularly clean work areas. Sweep or vacuum shop floors. Use mops instead of hosing floors.
- Don't pour mop water onto paved areas.
- Regularly inspect oil/water separators on catch basins.

For More Information Check Out...

The Green Wrench Guide Stormwater Best Practices for the Automotive Industry

www.projectcleanwater.org/pdf/green_wrench_guide-final.pdf



For more information on preventing stormwater pollution log onto www.ThinkBlueMA.org