

Preventing Storm Drain Pollution

Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Restaurants

Dine-In and Take-Out Restaurants | Cafés | Bars | Cafeterias | Catering Services



Storm Drains and the San Francisco Bay

Wash water, single-use foodware, trash, food waste, oil and grease are harmful to our creeks and waterways. When pollutants from restaurants enter the street and storm drain inlets, they flow through the storm drain system to local waterways and the San Francisco Bay (Bay) without any cleaning or filtering. These pollutants can be toxic to fish, wildlife, and people.

Help protect the Bay and local creeks by following these Best Management Practices (BMPs).

Preventing Stormwater Pollution

- Store materials indoors or in an enclosure whenever possible.
- Clean up and manage any litter on the property.
- Use a leak-proof cart to transport waste from the facility to the dumpster.
- Keep dumpster lids closed. Replace leaking or cracked dumpsters.
- Maintain garbage cans and dumpsters so that they are not overfilled. Increase service if there is overflow.
- Regularly maintain roof and equipment so that pollutants do not come in contact with rain water.
- Keep tallow bin lids closed and secured. Keep the surrounding area clean.
- Store tallow bins on flat surfaces, far from storm drains and with secondary containment (e.g. spill containment pallet, drip pan, behind berms).
- Prevent splashing and spills of oil when pouring oil and grease into tallow bin. Use a funnel. Keep tallow bin grates clean and free of debris.
- Clean any spills on the container or ground immediately using dry methods.
- Schedule tallow bin collection to maintain adequate storage capacity.
- Inspect area around tallow drums/bins and trash enclosures frequently to ensure they are clean and free of oil and food residue, debris and leaks.

Train Staff on BMPs to Prevent Stormwater Pollution

- Regularly train all levels of staff on BMPs to prevent stormwater pollution.
- Post signs and educational materials to remind staff of BMPs.
- Make sure all staff know the difference between the sanitary sewer and storm drain systems.
- Use dry cleaning methods when possible (e.g. vacuum, sweep, dry-wipe).



Only rain down the storm drain.

Never dispose of wash water or Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) to storm drains.

Federal, State, and local regulations prohibit any discharges other than rain in the storm drain.



Sanitary Sewer vs. Storm Drain: Do you know the difference?

Storm drains are outdoors. They are only for rain (“stormwater”) that runs off the pavement, roofs, streets and gutters. Water that enters the **storm drain system** flows directly to local creeks, without any treatment.

Indoor drains (e.g. sinks, floor drains, toilets, mop sinks) are connected to the **sanitary sewer system**, which flows to a wastewater treatment plant.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Restaurants

Proper Housekeeping

- Sweep outdoor areas and dumpster areas regularly.
- Never wash kitchen equipment outdoors or hose off outdoor surfaces where wash water can go to the street, gutter or storm drain.
- Clean floor mats by shaking into a trash can or vacuuming. If needed, wash mats indoors or on a landscaped surface.
- Empty mop water and wash water into a mop sink, floor drain or other indoor drain connected to the sanitary sewer.
- Never clean exhaust hoods or filters outdoors where wash water may flow to a storm drain.
- Clean up any spills or leaks with dry methods immediately using towels or absorbents. Sweep used absorbents immediately and dispose of properly.
- Ensure your grease control device is maintained regularly to prevent sewer backups and overflows.



Keep dumpster lids closed.



Keep used oil container clean.



Empty mop water into mop sink.

Cleaning Exhaust Ducting and Rooftop Exhaust Fans

- Do not allow wash water to remain on roof or wash into downspouts.
- Collect the wash water and rinse water and dispose of properly.
- Whether you contract with a professional service or perform the cleaning yourself, you are liable for any illegal disposal to the storm drain. Wash water or rinse water may never be disposed of to the storm drain.

Stormwater Pollution Control Agencies

For more information on stormwater pollution control, contact your local agency.

Campbell, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, Saratoga
(West Valley Communities)(408) 354-4734
 Cupertino (408) 777-3236
 Los Altos(650) 947-2770
 Los Altos Hills(650) 941-7222
 Milpitas (408) 586-3365

Mountain View(650) 903-6378
 Palo Alto(650) 329-2122
 San José(408) 945-3000
 Santa Clara(408) 615-3080
 Unincorporated Santa Clara County(408) 918-4609
 Sunnyvale (408) 730-7260

Wastewater Agencies

All discharges to the sanitary sewer must meet local discharge limits.

Contact your local wastewater agency to find out if pretreatment requirements apply to your business.

San José-Santa Clara Regional Wastewater Facility (408) 945-3000
Serving Campbell, Cupertino, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, San Jose, Santa Clara, Saratoga
 Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant (408) 730-7270
Serving Sunnyvale
 Regional Water Quality Control Plant (650) 329-2598
Serving East Palo Alto Sanitary District, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Mountain View, Palo Alto, Stanford

For more information about Stormwater Pollution Prevention



1-866-WATERSHED

www.MyWatershedWatch.org



Updated April 2020