



## Objectives

- Cover
- Contain
- Educate
- Reduce/Minimize

## Description

As a consequence of its function, the stormwater conveyance system collects and transports urban runoff and stormwater that may contain certain pollutants. The protocols in this fact sheet are intended to reduce pollutants reaching receiving waters through proper conveyance system operation and maintenance.

## Approach

### *Pollution Prevention*

Maintain catch basins, stormwater inlets, and other stormwater conveyance structures on a regular basis to remove pollutants, reduce high pollutant concentrations during the first flush of storms, prevent clogging of the downstream conveyance system, restore catch basins' sediment trapping capacity, and ensure the system functions properly hydraulically to avoid flooding.

### *Suggested Protocols*

#### *Catch Basins/Inlet Structures*

- Staff should regularly inspect facilities to ensure compliance with the following:
  - Immediate repair of any deterioration threatening structural integrity.
  - Cleaning before the sump is 40% full. Catch basins should be cleaned as frequently as needed to meet this standard.
  - Stenciling of catch basins and inlets (see SC34 Waste Handling and Disposal).

## Targeted Constituents

Sediment	✓
Nutrients	
Trash	✓
Metals	
Bacteria	✓
Oil and Grease	
Organics	



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- Clean catch basins, storm drain inlets, and other conveyance structures before the wet season to remove sediments and debris accumulated during the summer.
- Conduct inspections more frequently during the wet season for problem areas where sediment or trash accumulates more often. Clean and repair as needed.
- Keep accurate logs of the number of catch basins cleaned.
- Store wastes collected from cleaning activities of the drainage system in appropriate containers or temporary storage sites in a manner that prevents discharge to the storm drain.
- Dewater the wastes if necessary with outflow into the sanitary sewer if permitted. Water should be treated with an appropriate filtering device prior to discharge to the sanitary sewer. If discharge to the sanitary sewer is not allowed, water should be pumped or vacuumed to a tank and properly disposed. Do not dewater near a storm drain or stream.

## *Storm Drain Conveyance System*

- Locate reaches of storm drain with deposit problems and develop a flushing schedule that keeps the pipe clear of excessive buildup.
- Collect and pump flushed effluent to the sanitary sewer for treatment whenever possible.

## *Pump Stations*

- Clean all storm drain pump stations prior to the wet season to remove silt and trash.
- Do not allow discharge to reach the storm drain system when cleaning a storm drain pump station or other facility.
- Conduct routine maintenance at each pump station.
- Inspect, clean, and repair as necessary all outlet structures prior to the wet season.

## *Open Channel*

- Modify storm channel characteristics to improve channel hydraulics, increase pollutant removals, and enhance channel/creek aesthetic and habitat value.
- Conduct channel modification/improvement in accordance with existing laws. Any person, government agency, or public utility proposing an activity that will change the natural (emphasis added) state of any river, stream, or lake in California, must enter into a Stream or Lake Alteration Agreement with the Department of Fish and Game. The developer-applicant should also contact local governments (city, county, special districts), other state agencies (SWRCB, RWQCB, Department of Forestry, Department of Water Resources), and Federal Corps of Engineers and USFWS.

## *Illicit Connections and Discharges*

- Look for evidence of illegal discharges or illicit connections during routine maintenance of conveyance system and drainage structures:
  - Is there evidence of spills such as paints, discoloring, etc?

- Are there any odors associated with the drainage system?
- Record locations of apparent illegal discharges/illicit connections?
- Track flows back to potential dischargers and conduct aboveground inspections. This can be done through visual inspection of upgradient manholes or alternate techniques including zinc chloride smoke testing, fluorometric dye testing, physical inspection testing, or television camera inspection.
- Eliminate the discharge once the origin of flow is established.
- Stencil or demarcate storm drains, where applicable, to prevent illegal disposal of pollutants. Storm drain inlets should have messages such as “Dump No Waste Drains to Stream” stenciled next to them to warn against ignorant or intentional dumping of pollutants into the storm drainage system.
- Refer to fact sheet SC-10 Non-Stormwater Discharges.

### *Illegal Dumping*

- Inspect and clean up hot spots and other storm drainage areas regularly where illegal dumping and disposal occurs.
- Establish a system for tracking incidents. The system should be designed to identify the following:
  - Illegal dumping hot spots
  - Types and quantities (in some cases) of wastes
  - Patterns in time of occurrence (time of day/night, month, or year)
  - Mode of dumping (abandoned containers, “midnight dumping” from moving vehicles, direct dumping of materials, accidents/spills)
  - Responsible parties
- Post “No Dumping” signs in problem areas with a phone number for reporting dumping and disposal. Signs should also indicate fines and penalties for illegal dumping.
- Refer to fact sheet SC-10 Non-Stormwater Discharges.

### *Training*

- Train crews in proper maintenance activities, including record keeping and disposal.
- Allow only properly trained individuals to handle hazardous materials/wastes.
- Have staff involved in detection and removal of illicit connections trained in the following:
  - OSHA-required Health and Safety Training (29 CFR 1910.120) plus annual refresher training (as needed).

- OSHA Confined Space Entry training (Cal-OSHA Confined Space, Title 8 and Federal OSHA 29 CFR 1910.146).
- Procedural training (field screening, sampling, smoke/dye testing, TV inspection).

***Spill Response and Prevention***

- Investigate all reports of spills, leaks, and/or illegal dumping promptly.
- Clean up all spills and leaks using “dry” methods (with absorbent materials and/or rags) or dig up, remove, and properly dispose of contaminated soil.
- Refer to fact sheet SC-11 Spill Prevention, Control, and Cleanup.

***Other Considerations (Limitations and Regulations)***

- Clean-up activities may create a slight disturbance for local aquatic species. Access to items and material on private property may be limited. Trade-offs may exist between channel hydraulics and water quality/riparian habitat. If storm channels or basins are recognized as wetlands, many activities, including maintenance, may be subject to regulation and permitting.
- Storm drain flushing is most effective in small diameter pipes (36-inch diameter pipe or less, depending on water supply and sediment collection capacity). Other considerations associated with storm drain flushing may include the availability of a water source, finding a downstream area to collect sediments, liquid/sediment disposal, and prohibition against disposal of flushed effluent to sanitary sewer in some areas.
- Regulations may include adoption of substantial penalties for illegal dumping and disposal.
- Local municipal codes may include sections prohibiting discharge of soil, debris, refuse, hazardous wastes, and other pollutants into the storm drain system.

**Requirements*****Costs***

- An aggressive catch basin cleaning program could require a significant capital and O&M budget.
- The elimination of illegal dumping is dependent on the availability, convenience, and cost of alternative means of disposal. The primary cost is for staff time. Cost depends on how aggressively a program is implemented. Other cost considerations for an illegal dumping program include:
  - Purchase and installation of signs.
  - Rental of vehicle(s) to haul illegally-disposed items and material to landfills.
  - Rental of heavy equipment to remove larger items (e.g., car bodies) from channels.
  - Purchase of landfill space to dispose of illegally-dumped items and material.

- Methods used for illicit connection detection (smoke testing, dye testing, visual inspection, and flow monitoring) can be costly and time-consuming. Site-specific factors, such as the level of impervious area, the density and ages of buildings, and type of land use will determine the level of investigation necessary.

## ***Maintenance***

- Two-person teams may be required to clean catch basins with vacuor trucks.
- Teams of at least two people plus administrative personnel are required to identify illicit discharges, depending on the complexity of the storm sewer system.
- Arrangements must be made for proper disposal of collected wastes.
- Technical staff are required to detect and investigate illegal dumping violations.

## **Supplemental Information**

### ***Further Detail of the BMP***

#### ***Storm Drain Flushing***

Flushing is a common maintenance activity used to improve pipe hydraulics and to remove pollutants in storm drainage systems. Flushing may be designed to hydraulically convey accumulated material to strategic locations, such as an open channel, another point where flushing will be initiated, or the sanitary sewer and the treatment facilities, thus preventing resuspension and overflow of a portion of the solids during storm events. Flushing prevents “plug flow” discharges of concentrated pollutant loadings and sediments. Deposits can hinder the designed conveyance capacity of the storm drain system and potentially cause backwater conditions in severe cases of clogging.

Storm drain flushing usually takes place along segments of pipe with grades that are too flat to maintain adequate velocity to keep particles in suspension. An upstream manhole is selected to place an inflatable device that temporarily plugs the pipe. Further upstream, water is pumped into the line to create a flushing wave. When the upstream reach of pipe is sufficiently full to cause a flushing wave, the inflated device is rapidly deflated with the assistance of a vacuum pump, thereby releasing the backed up water and resulting in the cleaning of the storm drain segment.

To further reduce impacts of stormwater pollution, a second inflatable device placed well downstream may be used to recollect the water after the force of the flushing wave has dissipated. A pump may then be used to transfer the water and accumulated material to the sanitary sewer for treatment. In some cases, an interceptor structure may be more practical or required to recollect the flushed waters.

It has been found that cleansing efficiency of periodic flush waves is dependent upon flush volume, flush discharge rate, sewer slope, sewer length, sewer flow rate, sewer diameter, and population density. As a rule of thumb, the length of line to be flushed should not exceed 700 feet. At this maximum recommended length, the percent removal efficiency ranges between 65-75% for organics and 55-65% for dry weather grit/inorganic material. The percent removal efficiency drops rapidly beyond that. Water is commonly supplied by a water truck, but fire hydrants can also supply water. To make the best use of water, it is recommended that reclaimed water be used or that fire hydrant line flushing coincide with storm sewer flushing.

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## References and Resources

California's Nonpoint Source Program Plan <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/nps/index.html>

Clark County Storm Water Pollution Control Manual  
<http://www.co.clark.wa.us/pubworks/bmpman.pdf>

Ferguson, B.K. 1991. Urban Stream Reclamation, p. 324-322, Journal of Soil and Water Conservation.

King County Storm Water Pollution Control Manual <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/dss/spcm.htm>

Oregon Association of Clean Water Agencies. Oregon Municipal Stormwater Toolbox for Maintenance Practices. June 1998.

Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program <http://www.scvurppp.org>

The Storm Water Managers Resource Center <http://www.stormwatercenter.net>

United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). 2002. Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations Storm Drain System Cleaning. On line:  
[http://www.epa.gov/npdes/menuofbmps/poll\\_16.htm](http://www.epa.gov/npdes/menuofbmps/poll_16.htm)