

Stormwater Best Management Practices for Supermarkets and Grocery Stores

In Alameda County, all storm drains flow directly to creeks and the San Francisco Bay with no treatment. In response to federal and state regulations and requirements, the municipalities in Alameda County have joined to form the Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program (ACCWP). The ACCWP has launched a public education campaign and inspection program. Recent stormwater inspections at supermarkets and grocery stores have identified stormwater quality problems common countywide. The ACCWP has adopted the following best management practices, or BMPs, which will help supermarkets and grocery stores reduce their contribution to water pollution. These BMPs have been adopted at a countywide level to promote consistency.

I. Dumpsters and Compactors

Impacts to Stormwater:

- Leaks from liquid wastes or rainwater in the dumpsters, and hydraulic fluids from compactors flow to the gutter, storm drains, or creeks
- Litter, waste, and garbage are left on the ground to wash away with rainwater to the gutter, storm drains, or creeks

BMPs:

- Minimize the amount of liquid placed in dumpsters or compactors. For example, drain liquid food wastes to the sanitary sewer and place only the empty container in the dumpster or compactor. Or use a screen or colander to remove solids from liquid waste; liquid wastes goes to the sanitary sewer, and solid wastes go to the trash.
- Keep dumpster lids closed to keep out rainwater.
- Route leaks and other wastewaters from dumpsters and compactors to the sanitary sewer system. See additional guidelines for routing wastewaters to the sanitary sewer.
- Control litter. Make sure waste is contained in dumpsters and compactors. Sweep dumpster and compactor area regularly.
- Inspect dumpsters and compactors regularly for leaks or stains (at least once a month). Inspect dumpster and compactor area for litter regularly (at least once a week).
- Immediately replace leaking dumpsters and compactors.

II. Cleaning and Washing Activities

Impacts to Stormwater:

- Washwaters laden with soap, dirt, grease, oil, and other pollutants are dumped or allowed to flow to the gutter, storm drains, or creeks

BMPs:

- Clean equipment (including carts, floor mats, garbage cans, and tray racks) in a designated wash area that allows **no** discharge to the storm drains.
 - ◇ If the designated wash area is outdoors, collect and pump the washwater to the sanitary sewer. See additional guidance for collecting washwaters.
 - ◇ Temporary cleaning areas must be adequate to contain all washwaters. The temporary cleaning area is inadequate if washwater reaches gutters, storm drains, or creeks.
- Discharge washwaters to the sanitary sewer system when cleaning flat surfaces only (e.g., loading dock, store, windows, parking areas, driveways, etc.). Minimize the amount of washwater used.
 - ◇ Sweep the area before washing.
 - ◇ If wet cleaning is required, block the storm drain or contain all washwaters, and discharge to the sanitary sewer system. See additional guidance for collecting washwaters.
 - ◇ If **no soap** is used, washwaters from the following types of surfaces may be discharged to landscaping or the storm drains after the washwater has been screened to catch debris. When screening washwater, pass the water through a “20 mesh” or finer screen to catch the material. Dispose of the captured material in the trash.
 - * sidewalks, plazas
 - * building surfaces, decks, etc. without loose paint

Remember that your facility is responsible for the behavior of contractors you hire. Ask your contractor if they have received training for surface cleaners from the Bay Area Stormwater Management Association of Agencies (BASMAA). Be sure you know how your contractor will be cleaning your equipment and disposing of washwater. **Discharging washwaters with soap or any other type of pollutant to the storm drains is illegal!**

III. Maintenance Practices

Impacts to Stormwater:

- Oil, hydraulic fluids, grease, coolant, and other fluid deposits on the ground from storage or maintenance of heavy equipment (e.g., fork lifts, vehicle equipment, refrigerator units, etc.) can wash away with rainwater to the gutter, storm drains, or creeks

BMPs:

- Maintain equipment regularly. Check for leaks or stains. Fix leaks.
- Capture leaks and drips during maintenance activities with a drip pan.
- If equipment is stored outdoors, store equipment under a roof or tarp during rain.

IV. Spill Control

Impacts to Stormwater:

- Waste foods and garbage dumped, washed, or allowed to flow to the gutter, storm drains, or creeks
- Spillage from grease bins allowed to flow or wash away with rain to the gutter, storm drains, or creeks

BMPs:

- Dispose of waste food and garbage in the dumpster or compactor.
- Be prepared for spills:
 - ◇ Develop spill procedures for different types of spills (e.g., garbage, liquid food wastes, fuel etc.).
 - ◇ Train employees on cleanup procedures.
 - ◇ Keep cleanup kits in well-marked, easily accessible areas.
- If you mop up a spill, dispose of mop/washwater appropriately in indoor sinks for discharge to the sanitary sewer.

V. Additional Guidance

A. Routing Leaks And Other Wastewaters To The Sanitary Sewer System:

Our shared goal is to work toward only clean rainwater entering the storm drains. However, inspectors of the ACCWP agencies understand that some facilities cannot simply eliminate a non-stormwater discharge or transfer the discharge to the sanitary sewer without significant capital investment. In such cases, the following options describe an incremental approach that would give these facilities a window to comply and develop solutions to eliminate the discharge.

Best Option: Route wastewater to a sanitary connection:

- ◇ Minimize the amount of rainwater run on if you discharge the liquid to a floor drain connected to the sanitary sewer in an uncovered area (e.g., by berming, grading, or using a close out valve).
- ◇ Contact the local wastewater treatment agency if you are installing a new connection to the sanitary sewer or need assistance with locating an existing connection. Sanitary connections are subject to the review, approval, and conditions (e.g., pretreatment requirements, monitoring, fees, etc.) of the wastewater treatment agency receiving the discharge.

Acceptable Option: Install a berm around the dumpster or compactor. Pump wastewater to a sanitary connection (e.g. clean out, or sink). Establish a regular schedule and person responsible for inspecting and pumping the bermed area.

Acceptable Option: Place a drip pan under dumpster, compactor, or hydraulic unit leaks. Empty the pan into a sink or toilet. Establish a regular schedule and person responsible for inspecting and emptying the collection container.

The Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program has adopted this incremental approach as an option only when eliminating or routing the non-stormwater discharge to the sanitary sewer is not immediately feasible, with the understanding that all non-stormwater discharges to the storm drain will be eliminated within a reasonable period. *A reasonable period for such structural/treatment controls is one to twelve months, depending on the severity of the pollutant impact and the physical logistics and cost of construction.*

B. Collecting Washwaters:

The best place to clean equipment is a wash pad with a sanitary sewer connection. If your facility does not have a wash pad, you can still create a designated wash area that prevents washwater from discharging to the storm drains.

1. Create a collection area with booms or take advantage of a low spot to keep washwater contained.
2. Block flow to storm drains with an impervious barrier such as sandbags or booms, OR Seal the storm drain with plugs or rubber mats.
3. Pump collected washwater to the sanitary sewer (e.g., sink or sewer cleanout).

When washing large areas, it is important to recognize the grading and identify how water will flow in the area. A low spot is a natural location to collect washwaters. A low spot outdoors usually also contains a storm drain inlet to prevent flooding during rains. Once you have identified what storm drains will be impacted by the cleaning, follow all three steps:

- ◇ Dry sweep or vacuum all litter, debris, or saturated absorbent. Use absorbents (such as rags, absorbent mats or pads, rice hull ash, cat litter, vermiculite, or sand) to pick up greasy or oily spills.
- ◇ Block flow to storm drains with an impervious barrier such as sandbags, rubber mats, or booms, OR seal the storm drain with plugs or rubber mats.
- ◇ Pump the collected washwater to landscaping, or a sewer cleanout, or a container for later disposal to the sanitary sewer.

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For local information, contact:

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