

Food & Restaurant Industries...

How to Prevent Water & Storm Sewer Pollution

Best Management Practices For:
Restaurants
Delis & Bakeries
Grocery Stores
Convenience Stores
Food Stands
Institutional & Workplace Cafeterias

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Stormwater Pollution

What is Stormwater?

Stormwater is water from rain or melting snow that does not soak into the ground. It flows from rooftops, over paved areas, bare soil, and sloped lawns. As it flows, stormwater runoff collects and transports soil, animal waste, salt, pesticides, fertilizers, oil and grease, debris and other potential pollutants.

What is the Problem?

Rain and snowmelt wash pollutants from streets, construction sites, and land into storm sewers and ditches. Eventually, the storm sewers and ditches empty the polluted stormwater directly into streams and rivers with no treatment. This is known as stormwater pollution. Polluted stormwater degrades our lakes, rivers, wetlands and other waterways. Nutrients such as phosphorous and nitrogen can cause the overgrowth of algae resulting in oxygen depletion in waterways. Toxic substances from motor vehicles and careless application of pesticides and fertilizers threaten water quality and can kill fish and other aquatic life. Bacteria from animal wastes and improper connections to storm sewer systems can make lakes and waterways unsafe for wading, swimming and fish consumption. Eroded soil is a pollutant as well. It clouds the waterway and interferes with the habitat of fish and plant life. Fortunately, stormwater pollution can be prevented or minimized by implementing Best Management Practices which are procedures or activities that reduce or eliminate pollutants in stormwater.

How to Prevent Pollution from Food & Restaurant Industries

Fats, oil, grease, floor solvents, cleaning agents, cigarette butts, food waste, paper napkins and Styrofoam all contribute to the pollution of our creeks and waterways. By implementing proper cleaning and waste management practices the introduction of these pollutants to our waterways can be avoided. Food and restaurant-related pollutants invade storm drain systems and increase bacteria levels, which harm aquatic life, cause beach closures and impair our drinking water supplies. Floating materials also pollute our lakes and streams and reduce the natural beauty of our waterways. This results in a negative impact on aesthetics of our natural resources and tourism/recreation opportunities.

Best Management Practices

General Cleaning Operations

- Clean floor mats, filters and garbage cans in a slop sink, floor drain or proper outside area. NOT the parking lot, alley or sidewalk/street.
- Pour wash water into a janitorial sink. NOT outside in a parking lot, alley or sidewalk/street.
- Use the least toxic cleaning products available, and use cleaning products sparingly.
- Dispose of cleaners (solvents, floor cleaners and detergents) and cleaning rags properly
- Use dry methods for spill clean-up. SWEEP instead of hosing. Use cat litter to absorb spills.

Solid Waste Handling & Storage

- Keep dumpster lids closed and the areas around them clean. Do not fill them with liquid waste or hose them out.
- Use plastic bags, tied off, to keep dumpsters free of food debris. Never place liquid waste or leaky garbage bags into a dumpster.
- Have clean-up materials readily accessible near the dumpster and loading dock areas in case of an accidental spill.
- Keep dumpster and dumpster enclosures locked to prevent illegal dumping.
- Keep outdoor litter from accumulating by providing trash receptacles and encourage employees and patrons to use them.
- Sweep outside areas regularly and put the debris into the garbage instead of sweeping/hosing into the parking lot or street.

Grease Management

- Install pretreatment equipment, such as a grease interceptor.
- Clean grease traps regularly.
- Collect bulk grease in containers and contact a firm to recycle waste into a useful by-product.
- Don't pour grease into sinks, floor drains, trash bins, street gutters, or parking lots.
- Inform employees about these Best Management Practices and include this information in training programs.

Created and distributed as part of our stormwater management program to protect our waterways and enhance our quality of life. Our goal is to identify existing resources and develop programs to reduce the negative impacts of stormwater pollution. This is part of the implementation of a stormwater management program that complies with New York State's Stormwater regulations. -2/2009