

Mobile Cleaners: Carpet, Upholstery Cleaners, Janitorial Service Providers... How to Prevent Water & Storm Sewer Pollution

Best Management Practices For:
Carpet Cleaners
Upholstery Cleaners
Drapery Cleaners
Window Washers
Janitorial & Housekeeping Service Providers
High Pressure, Steam Cleaners

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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 Commercial Cleaning Agents

Although mobile cleaners and pressure washers discharge waste water at various locations, the following practices are recommended to eliminate discharge into storm sewers.

Best Management Practices

General Practices

Waste resulting from cleaning activities cannot be discharged into a storm drain. Mobile cleaners should have the equipment, materials and personnel to handle a spill. Take preventative action to act quickly to reduce illegal discharge. If a spill occurs, use environmentally friendly products (e.g. kitty litter) to contain the spilled materials. Protect storm drains. Report all spills and discharges that cannot be contained to local authorities for their help.

Best Management Practices

Operational Practices

All water and detergents, even those that are labeled nontoxic or biodegradable, should be filtered first to remove any solids before discharging into a sanitary sewer. Solids may clog pipes. The solids may be thrown into the garbage, unless they have been contaminated with hazardous materials.

Wash water from carpet, drapery or furniture cleaning must be discharged into a sink, toilet or other drain connected to a sanitary sewer.

Never throw wash water into a street, gutter, parking lot or storm drain.

Dry cleanup first, then wash without soap and then with soap to reduce contaminated runoff.

Avoid power washing surfaces that may contain lead paint.

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