

LANDSCAPE AND GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

To protect Pinole Creek and San Francisco Bay, keep pollutants out of our storm drain system. Materials swept, blown, or washed into the storm drains end up in these open waters where they degrade water quality and hurt aquatic life.

In addition to reviewing their own practices, municipalities participating in the Contra Costa County Clean Water Program (CCCCWP) have instituted a public education campaign and inspection program. Inspectors work with contractors and businesses to identify and control potential discharge of pollutants to the storm drain system. Business and facility owners are responsible for their contractors' practices.

The goal of the CCCCWP is to control discharges of pollutants to municipal storm drain systems (and Pinole Creek and the S.F. Bay) using Best Management Practices (BMPs) and effectively eliminate illegal discharges and connections. BMPs are methods and practices such as good housekeeping, spill prevention, or treatment measures to prevent or minimize pollutant discharges to municipal storm drain systems. Illegal discharges of illicit connection discharge non-storm water to municipal storm drain systems, which contribute to water pollution.

Landscape and grounds maintenance activities are potential sources of stormwater pollution. Pollutants such as leaves, clippings, and dirt left on paved areas can eventually be washed or swept into the storm drains. As a result, these pollutants can cause local flooding by clogging drains, and may reduce the aesthetic and recreational values of nearby Pinole Creek and the San Francisco Bay. Organic matter such as lawn clippings and leaves decay in the water, consuming oxygen and killing plants and animals. Fertilizers are major sources of nutrients. Added nutrients may lead to excess algae growth, a nuisance that may impact wildlife habitat. Additionally, pesticide residues that are washed or blown into storm drains may harm wildlife and degrade water quality.

The storm drain system was built to collect and transport rain to prevent flooding in urban areas. Anything that flows or is discharged into the storm drain system goes directly into Pinole Creek and on to San Francisco Bay without treatment. Urban runoff is rain and any other water that passes through and out of developed areas (streets, parking lots, rooftops, etc.) into the storm drain system and eventually to Pinole Creeks and other waters.

The cumulative effects of stormwater pollution include reduced water quality and increased toxicity to fish and other organisms. All landscape and grounds maintenance crews can apply common sense practices to minimize or eliminate their contribution to stormwater pollution. Some such practices are identified on the reverse side of this page.

Landscape Maintenance Practices to Protect Water Quality

The Goal: “Only rain in the storm drain”
The objectives: Keep pollutants from contacting rain and being dumped, blown, swept washed or poured into storm drains.

Activities

Practices to Protect Water Quality

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- Landscape Care
 - Blow or rake leaves into a pile and contain for pickup or discard in garbage.
 - Do not allow leaves to collect in the gutter!**
 - Sweep up any leaves and litter in the gutters, and any residue left on the street.
 - Dispose of debris in the garbage.
 - Collect yard waste for composting.
 - Schedule excavation and grading projects for the dry weather season.
 - Store stock piled materials inside a building, under a roof, or covered with a secured tarp or sheeting to prevent contact with rain.
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- Litter Control
 - Pick up litter and other wastes regularly from outside areas including storm drain inlet grates.
 - Use dry clean-up methods, such as sweeping, to preserve both water and water-quality.
 - Never dispose of waste products in storm drain inlets.
 - Ensure an adequate number of trash receptacles are accessible.
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- Irrigation
 - Use water efficiently. Call East Bay Municipal Utility District’s Water conservation Department at (510) 287-0590 for more information.
 - Minimize irrigation runoff to the storm drain system as it may contain chemicals from municipal water treatment, pesticides or fertilizers that can adversely affect wildlife.
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- Pesticides
 - Choose disease-resistant plants that do well in your local area.
 - Encourage beneficial insects with a variety of flowering plants.
 - Limit pest preferred habitat (ivy, standing water, woodpiles, mulch) and breeding areas (animal waste, rotting fruit, debris).
 - Contact U.C. Cooperative Extension for information on Integrated Pest Management: (510) 670-5200
 - Minimize the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers to major problem areas.
 - Read pesticide and fertilizer labels carefully and apply as directed.
 - Do not apply pesticides or fertilizers before rainstorms because they may be washed into the storm drain.
 - Recycle or dispose of chemical wastes properly.
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- Equipment
 - Soak up leaks and spills with an absorbent. Dispose of absorbent properly.
 - Maintain equipment and vehicles regularly. Check for and fix leaks. Use drip pans to collect leaks or spills during maintenance activities.
 - Wash equipment/vehicles in an unpaved area or in a designated and/or covered area where the washwater is collected to be recycled or discharged to the sanitary sewer.
 - Don’t let washwater reach the storm drain.**

Please note that all hazardous materials must be stored and disposed of in accordance with federal, state, and local requirements.