Community Partners for Clean Streams

Preventing Pollution Spills

SMALL SPILLS RESULT IN BIG COSTS

Even a small spill can pollute vast amounts of water. For example, one quart of oil can contaminate up to **two million gallons** of water! In addition to environmental impacts, cleaning up a spill that has reached a lake, river or stream can cost millions of dollars. If the source of the spill can be identified, the responsible party is legally liable for all clean-up costs.

For these reasons, any business that uses chemical, petroleum, or even some bulk food products should establish basic procedures to follow in the event of a spill. You may be required to prepare a spill prevention and response plan under federal, state and/or county law.

Preventing Spills

Preventing spills is easier and less costly than cleaning them up. Examine your business practices for ways to prevent spills.

- Don't allow open containers or tanks that are being filled to be left unattended.
- Use a funnel when transferring liquids from one container to another.
- Buy products in smaller quantities. Hazardous chemical reporting and compliance is also easier with smaller containers.

Dangerous Drainage

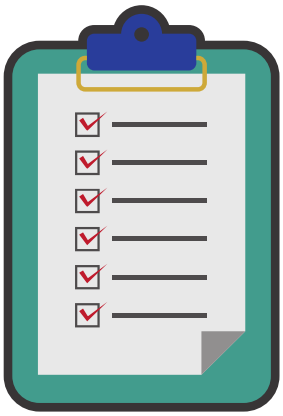
Never allow storage areas to drain to any part of a stormwater management system.

- Connect drains to a holding tank. If a spill occurs, the tank's contents will need to be pumped out and disposed of by a licensed waste hauler.
- You may be able to drain to the sanitary sewer system. Call your local wastewater treatment plant to make sure materials can be accepted.
- Equip floor drains with shut-off valves in case of a spill.

PREPARING A SPILL RESPONSE CHECKLIST

In general, a spill response checklist should include the following:

1. A description of the facility, including:
    - the owner's name and address
    - activities performed on-site
    - chemicals used and chemical storage areas
    - storm drains and surrounding areas
    - the location of spill control devices such as drain shut-off valves



2. A list of the persons responsible for:
    - spill response (including cleanup)
    - updating the spill control plan
    - training staff in clean-up procedures
    - testing the clean-up kit equipment
    - maintaining the kit's inventory

3. Specific clean-up instructions for each material handled on-site, safety requirements, and guidelines for evacuation.

4. Spill containment and clean-up kits should be clearly labeled, easy to find and easy to use. Include any needed safety equipment and clean-up materials appropriate to the types and quantities of materials that could spill. For hazardous materials, this information can be found on the product's Material Safety and Data Sheet (MSDS).

5. Post a summary of your spill control plan at appropriate locations. The summary should include the name(s) of clean-up coordinators, the location of clean-up materials, and who to contact in case of a spill.

6. Periodically review the plan with the employees responsible for its implementation.

Report significant spills to the appropriate authorities and get outside help if needed.

If a hazardous substance could enter the sanitary sewer system, notify your local wastewater treatment plant, as soon as possible.

Regulatory agencies must be notified in the event of a spill. Since laws governing spill response can be confusing, **it's a good idea to protect yourself by calling 911.**