



# Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs)

## Automotive Maintenance and Car Care



Storm drains are intended to drain rain water from our streets and to prevent flooding. When this rain, along with water from households (such as landscape water) mixes with urban pollutants that include oil, paint, pet waste, pesticides, litter, and other automotive fluids, it becomes polluted urban runoff. Unfortunately, because this water is not filtered or treated before it enters our rivers and waterways, storm drains also serve the *unintentional purpose* of transporting this urban pollution, contaminating our waterways, harming aquatic life, and increasing the risk of flooding by clogging gutters and catch basins.

You can help prevent stormwater pollution during automotive maintenance and car care activities by remembering the following:

- **General**

- Maintain facility grounds and cover or move indoors activities and materials to prevent contact with storm water.
- Label drains within the facility boundary (by paint, stencil, or equivalent) to indicate whether they flow to an oil/water separator, directly to the sewer, or to a storm drain.
- Inspect and clean, if necessary, storm drain inlets and catch basins within the facility boundary before October 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.
- Sweep parking lots and areas around your facility instead of washing them down with water.
- Do not hose down your shop floor. It is best to sweep regularly.
- Use non-toxic cleaning products. Baking soda paste works well on battery heads, cable clamps and chrome. Mix the soda with a mild, biodegradable dishwashing soap to clean wheels and tires; for windows, mix white vinegar or lemon juice with water.

- **Spills**

- Always be prepared for spills. Clean up spills using absorbent materials (such as kitty litter, sawdust, or cornmeal) and then dispose of all waste into the trash. Never hose down spills into the storm drain system. Remember: leaks are not cleaned up until the absorbent is picked up and disposed of properly.
- Develop and maintain a spill response plan.
- Place an adequate stockpile of spill cleanup materials where it will be readily accessible.
- Spot clean leaks and drips routinely.

- **Fluids**

- Regular car maintenance prevents fluids from leaking onto streets and washing into storm drains.
- Change fluids carefully. Use a drip pan to avoid spills. Keep a drip pan under the vehicle while unclipping hoses, unscrewing filters, or removing other parts. Use a drip pan on any vehicle that might leak. Collected drips and spills must be disposed, reused, or recycled properly.
- Prevent fluid leaks from stored vehicles. Drain fluids such as unused gas, hydraulic oil, transmission, brake, and radiator fluids from vehicles or parts kept in storage.
- Monitor parked vehicles for leaks. Pans should be placed under any leaks to collect the fluids for proper disposal or recycling.
- Perform all vehicle fluid removal or changing inside or under cover. Cover outside work areas to keep rain from washing away spilled material. Extend the cover several feet beyond the area and clean up all spills immediately using a dry sweep method.
- Implement simple work practices to reduce the chance of spills. Use a funnel when pouring liquids and place a tray underneath to catch spills. Place drip pans under the spouts of liquid storage containers. Clean up spills immediately.

- **Parts Cleaning**

- Steam cleaning and pressure washing should be used instead of solvent parts cleaning, if possible. The wastewater generated from steam cleaning must be discharged to an on-site oil/water separator that is connected to a sanitary sewer or blind sump. Never discharge wastewater from steam cleaning or engine/parts cleaning to a street, gutter, or storm drain.

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- Designate specific areas or service bays for engine, parts, or radiator cleaning. Do not wash or rinse parts outdoors. Keep water from flowing to storm drains, gutters, and streets.
- Use self-contained sinks and tanks when working with solvents. Keep sinks and tanks covered when not in use.
- Collect and reuse parts cleaning solvents and water used in flushing and testing radiators. When reuse is no longer possible, these solutions may be hazardous wastes and must be disposed of properly.
- **Washing Vehicles**
  - Prevent oil, grease, suspended solids, and toxics from washing into storm drains.
  - Designate a washing site where water drains to the sewer system. The area must be paved and well-marked as a washing area. Post signs prohibiting oil changes and washing with solvents. Train all employees to use the designated area.
  - Wash vehicles with biodegradable, phosphate-free detergent. Use a hose with a nozzle to conserve water and minimize urban runoff.
- **Materials and Waste Handling**
  - Label all hazardous wastes according to hazardous waste regulations.
  - Keep lids on waste barrels and containers and store them indoors or under cover to reduce exposure to rain and to prevent spills from reaching the sanitary sewer or storm drain system.
  - Chemical containers that still have product in them cannot go into your regular trash. They are considered hazardous waste and must be disposed of properly. **Do not pour leftover automotive fluids down floor drains, sinks, or outdoor storm drain inlets.**
  - Do not leave drip pans or other open containers lying around.
  - Recycle oil.
  - Store waste containers of antifreeze and oil within secondary containment. Antifreeze and waste oil should be stored separately and recycled or disposed of as hazardous waste.
- **Cleaning Floors**
  - Collect all metal filings, dust, and paint chips from grinding, shaving, and dispose of waste properly. Collect all dust from brake pads separately and dispose of the waste properly. Never sweep these wastes outside.
  - Use dry cleaning methods (i.e., sweeping and vacuuming) to prevent the discharge of pollutants into the storm drain system.
  - If waster is used, block off the storm drain to contain runoff and collect wash water to pump to the sanitary sewer through a sand/oil interceptor. If wash water does not contain soap or chemicals, it may be discharged to a pervious surface (i.e., dirt or grass).
- **Employee Training**
  - Train all employees on these practices.
  - Train all employees on the facility's spill control plan and proper spill containment and cleanup procedures.

### **Recycling and Hazardous Waste Disposal**

City of Modesto  
Solid Waste Management  
(209)577-5494

Stanislaus County  
Household Hazardous Waste Facility  
(209)525-4123

**To report a clogged storm drain, spill, or illegal dumping, or for more information:  
call City of Modesto Environmental Services 24/7 at (209)577-6200**