

# Pollution From Surface Cleaning



# Why Care?

- Storm water discharges are untreated
- Storm drains discharge to local creeks and the Bay
- Wash water from surface cleaning activities carry pollutants which are harmful to vegetation and aquatic life



# Discharges are Against the Law!

- Allowing polluting substances into storm drains is prohibited in California.
- The person who discharges the pollutant (or leaves it behind) and the property owner(s) are both liable.
- Information found within this presentation is **not** intended to be appropriate for other mobile cleaning jobs
  - Fleet washing and detailing,
  - Carpet cleaning, or
  - Food-related equipment

DUMP NO WASTE



DRAINS TO BAY

# Where Do These Pollutants Come From?

Three phases of the cleaning process can cause problems for the environment:

- **Using** harmful cleaning chemicals - (soaps and solvents)
- **Removing** toxic materials (oil, antifreeze, and grease) from parking lots, sidewalks, or other surfaces
- **Generating** polluted wash water from activities (wet sand blasting of buildings) to remove paint

# What Types of Hazardous Waste are Generated from Surface Cleaning?

- Oil-saturated absorbents
  - Does not include oil-saturated rags, which can be cleaned at an industrial laundry
- Wash water that contains lead paint chips
- Solvent cleaners



# So Where Should Wash Water Go?



# Landscaping or Unpaved Surfaces

Wash water from cleaning unpainted building exteriors, sidewalks, or plazas, if:

- Discharge does not contain hazardous waste

AND

- Discharge will not cause flooding or nuisance problems, or flow to a creek

AND

- You have the owner's permission



# Sink, Toilet, or Cleanout to the Wastewater Treatment Plant

- Wash water from surface cleaning of painted building exteriors, sidewalks, plazas, parking areas, drive-throughs, food service facility dumpster/grease containment areas, etc., if:
    - You have used dry cleanup methods before washing with or without soap
- AND





# Sink, Toilet, or Cleanout to the Wastewater Treatment Plant (cont'd)

- Discharge does not contain hazardous waste  
AND
- Parking lots, traffic areas, food service facility  
dumpster/grease containment areas)
  - You or the property owner(s) have checked the local  
wastewater treatment plant's requirements before  
discharging to the sanitary sewer

# Street or Storm Drain

- Wash water from cleaning sidewalks, plazas, and building exteriors, if:
  - You have **successfully** used dry cleanup methods  
AND
  - Cleaning is done with water only—no soap or other cleaning chemicals  
AND
  - Water has not removed paint

# Tips on Proper Cleaning and Disposal Methods



# Avoid Using Soap!

- Even biodegradable soap is harmful to the environment
- Before you use soap, test to see whether hot water under pressure will do the job.



# Dry Cleanup Methods

- Use absorbents (rags, absorbent mats or pads, rice hull ash, cat litter, vermiculite, or sand) to pick up greasy or oily spills
- Sweep or vacuum to pick up litter, debris, or saturated absorbents



# Dry Cleanup Methods (cont'd)

- Waste materials from dry cleanup (absorbents, paint chips, etc.) may often be disposed of in the trash
  - Check with the local solid waste authority
- Reusable rags may be sent to an industrial laundry



# Screen Wash Water

- Buildings and decks **without** loose paint, sidewalks, or plazas **without** soap,
- Thorough dry cleanup should be sufficient to protect storm drains



# Screen Wash Water (cont'd)

- If any debris could enter storm drains or remain in the gutter or street after cleaning:
  - Wash water should first pass through a “20 mesh” or finer screen to catch the material
  - Captured debris should be disposed of in the trash



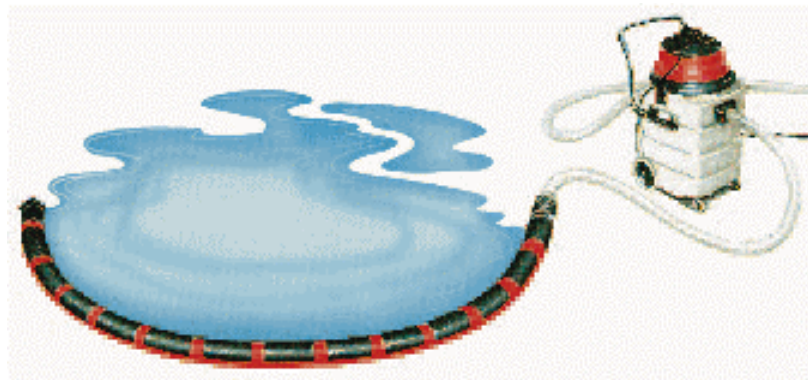
# Collect Wash Water

## Simple and Acceptable Method

- Requires only a drain plug, small sump pump, and a length of hose
- If a small parking-lot- type catch basin is available:
  - Remove the grate, plug the drain pipe, and place the pump in the catch basin (attached to a garden hose)
  - As wash water drains to the lowest spot, pump to landscaping, a sewer line cleanout, or a container for later disposal to the sanitary sewer.

# Collect Wash Water (cont'd)

- Vacuum booms may be used to capture and collect wash water.



# Direct Wash Water to Landscaping

- Direct wash water (no cleaning agents) to landscaped areas
- Check slope and area to avoid runoff into street or gutter
- If soil is very dry, wet it down thoroughly so wash water will sink in



# Block Storm Drains or Contain Wash Water

- Block storm drains with sand bags, plugs or rubber mats, vacuum booms, containment pads, or temporary berms.
- If wash water contains cleaning compounds, plug storm drains and vacuum (pump wastewater to sanitary sewer).
- **Non-storm water discharges are not permitted to enter the storm drain system!**



# Hazardous Waste Disposal

- Read cleaning product labels before disposing of wash water.
  - Follow use and disposal instructions carefully.
- Check with the city or county environmental health department to find out how small businesses can dispose of hazardous waste at a drop-off event.
  - You must generate less than 27 gallons or 220 pounds of hazardous waste each month to qualify.



# Equipment and Supplies

- Special materials which include sheets of absorbent, storm drain plugs and seals, small sump pumps, and vacuum booms are available.



# Remember This!

- **The discharge of soap or other pollutants to a storm drain or water body violates state and/or local regulations!**

