

*Be a part of the Team!  
Keep the Bay CLEAN!*



# Water Quality Protection Guidelines for Food Handling Facilities



Regional Water Quality  
Control Plant

Operated by the City of Palo Alto for the  
communities of East Palo Alto, Los Altos,  
Los Altos Hills, Mountain View, Palo Alto,  
and Stanford

**Water  
quality  
protection  
guidelines  
for food  
handling  
facilities**

In the Santa Clara Valley, storm drains flow directly to local creeks and San Francisco Bay, with no treatment. Storm water pollution is a serious problem for wildlife dependent on our waterways, and for people who live near polluted streams or baylands.

Food handling facilities such as restaurants, institutional cafeterias, grocery stores, bakeries, and delis, can contribute to stormwater pollution mainly through improper cleanup practices that allow food particles, oil and grease, and cleaning products to flow to a street, gutter, or storm drain.

In communities served by the Regional Water Quality Control Plant (East Palo Alto, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Mountain View, Palo Alto, and Stanford) discharge of grease or oil to the storm drain is prohibited by ordinance. Sanitary sewer grease traps or other grease removal devices are required for all new construction and are being retrofitted on existing facilities after a violation of the ordinance has been cited or by January 1, 1997, whichever comes sooner.



Following the “Best Management Practices” (BMPs) in this manual will ensure compliance with ordinance requirements with respect to both the sanitary sewer and the storm drains, and will contribute to a cleaner Bay.

## BMPs for a cleaner Bay



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## What types of pollution do food handling facilities generate?

All substances left in a street, gutter, parking lot, or alley—or dumped into a storm drain—end up in local creeks and San Francisco Bay, with no treatment.

- ❑ In addition to drawing flies and vermin and causing odor and public health problems, **decaying organic materials** use up dissolved oxygen in streams and the Bay, stressing or killing aquatic animals.
- ❑ **Oil and grease** cause additional health problems, and also plug sanitary sewer lines, causing sewer backups and severe risks to human health.
- ❑ Food handling facilities sometimes also discharge **toxic chemicals**, including cleaning products, disinfectants, and pesticides. Even biodegradable soaps contain ingredients which are initially toxic to aquatic life.

## Sewer or storm drain?

If you are not certain whether a drain leads to the storm drain or sanitary sewer, call your city's sewer department so that they can help you resolve the question. In general, drains inside the building are connected to the sanitary sewer, and outside drains (except for capped sanitary sewer "cleanouts") are connected to the storm drain system. Sanitary sewer cleanouts are usually 6 inches in diameter or smaller, and storm drain inlets are larger — *but there are exceptions*. You need to know for sure!

## When you're doing this. . .

*Cleaning dumpster areas, loading docks, or any paved surfaces*

*Cleaning up spills*

*Cleaning up hazardous materials (e.g. cleaning products)*

*Cleaning large equipment*

*Handling grease, oils, and meat fat*

*Maintaining cooling towers and refrigeration equipment*

*Landscaping and garden maintenance*

## . . . Don't forget to do this!

Control litter. Make sure the leasing company maintains and cleans dumpsters regularly; return leaking dumpsters for repair immediately. If you must wash down a dumpster, loading dock, or other outdoor surface for health reasons, use dry cleanup methods first, and then rinse, collect water, and discharge to the sink or indoor floor drain.

Control the spill, then sweep or clean up with rags and granular absorbents. Dispose absorbents to trash, then mop and collect water, put down sink or indoor floor drain.

Use procedure above, but send residue and absorbents to a hazardous waste disposal site.

Clean indoors or within a bermed outdoor area where cleaning water will not flow to a storm drain. Collect water and dispose to a sink or indoor floor drain.

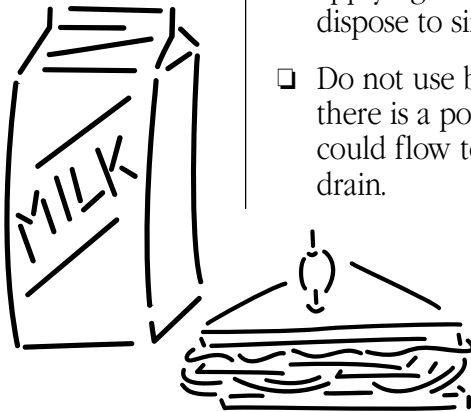
Save for recycling in sealed containers. Never pour into a sink, floor drain, or storm drain.

Make sure all discharges go to the sanitary sewer and NOT to the street, storm drain, or creek. Advise your maintenance contractor about storm drain protection.

Control erosion. Keep yard waste out of the street and storm drain. Use chemicals sparingly, and never in wet weather.

# BMP #1: Spill cleanup and pavement cleaning

*When cleaning  
dumpster areas,  
loading docks, and  
other paved sur-  
faces, and when-  
ever a spill occurs*



- ❑ First, stop any spill at its source.
- ❑ Next, dry sweep.
- ❑ IF wet cleaning (including high-temperature or high-pressure washing) is required, use this 3-step process:
  1. Clean up as much as possible with rags.
  2. Use granular absorbents (e.g. cat litter) to collect residue. Sweep and dispose in trash if hazardous materials are not involved.
  3. Mop (or, if absolutely necessary, wash) and collect water, and dispose of water in sink or sewer drain, **not** the storm drain.
- ❑ If a final rinse is necessary for health reasons, collect the rinse-water and dispose to sink or indoor floor drain. If outdoors, block storm drain before applying water, collect water, and dispose to sink or indoor drain.
- ❑ Do not use bleach or disinfectants if there is a possibility that rinse-water could flow to a street, gutter, or storm drain.

- ❑ Have spill cleanup materials handy in dumpster and loading dock areas.
- ❑ Keep litter from accumulating around loading docks by providing trash receptacles and encouraging employees to use them.
- ❑ Make sure that dumpsters and containers of grease, meat fat, and used cooking oil are always tightly covered.

Each establishment should have a spill clean-up plan that includes:

- ✓ Procedures for different types of spills
  - ✓ Schedule for training and refreshing employees about the procedures
  - ✓ Clean-up kits in well-marked, accessible locations
  - ✓ Designation of a key employee who monitors clean-up
- ❑ Post the plan in the work area.

## Dumpsters and loading dock areas

## Spill Cleanup plan



## **BMP #2: Cleaning and maintaining equipment**

*When cleaning  
floor mats, carts,  
tray racks, exhaust  
filters, hoods,  
cooking equipment,  
food containers, etc.*

- ❑ Do not clean equipment outdoors or in any area where water may flow to a street, gutter, storm drain, or creek.
- ❑ In order of preference:
  1. Clean equipment in a designated indoor area, such as a kitchen sink or floor, with a drain connected to the sanitary sewer.
  2. Clean equipment in a designated *covered* outdoor area with a drain connected to the sanitary sewer. This area should be isolated from the storm drain with a berm or other barrier.
  3. Clean equipment in a small designated uncovered outdoor area, isolated from the storm drain with a berm or other barrier, where water can be collected for disposal in the sanitary sewer.
- ❑ Use a static rinse tank to clean filters, screens, frying racks, etc. Dispose of used solution to the sanitary sewer.
- ❑ If possible, use floor mats that are small enough to be cleaned inside near a floor sink or drain plumbed to the sanitary sewer.
- ❑ Drain, oven, and toilet bowl cleaners: Use up, and place empty containers in dumpster.

- ❑ Never pour oil, grease, or large quantities of oily liquids such as sauces or salad dressings down a sink, sanitary sewer drain, storm drain, or into a dumpster. Most landfills will not accept grease or other liquid wastes from business/commercial customers.
  - ❑ Recycle waste oil and grease whenever possible.
  - ❑ Inspect and clean grease interceptors and traps regularly. In Santa Clara County, health department regulations require you to clean grease traps at least every three months.
- 
- ❑ Make sure all discharges from cooling equipment goes to the sanitary sewer and NOT to the street, storm drain, or creek.
  - ❑ Make sure your maintenance contractor is knowledgeable and skilled at minimizing corrosion with correct chemical treatment.



### **BMP #3: Grease handling and disposal**

*When cleaning frying equipment or storing fat or grease for removal to a grease recycler*

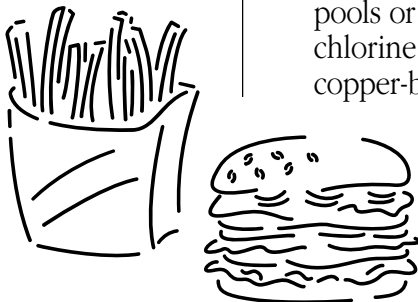
### **BMP #4. Refrigeration/ cooling tower maintenance**

*For large food handling facilities such as grocery stores, with large refrigeration units and cooling towers*

## BMP #5: Landscaping and garden maintenance

*For restaurants  
and other busi-  
nesses with land-  
scaped grounds*

- ❑ Schedule grading and earth-moving landscaping projects for periods of dry weather.
- ❑ When landscaping, protect nearby storm drains with hay bales or other erosion controls. Refer to *Blueprint for a Clean Bay*, a simple manual of construction practices that will minimize stormwater pollution, available from the Regional Water Quality Control Plant or the Santa Clara Valley Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program. (See numbers at right.)
- ❑ Collect grass clippings, leaves, tree pruning waste, etc. for composting or place in trash. Do not blow, rake, or sweep yard waste into the street or gutter.
- ❑ Use minimal amounts of pesticides, fertilizers, etc.—and only in dry weather periods. Never exceed manufacturer’s recommended application rates. Landscaping runoff is a significant source of stormwater pollution.
- ❑ Do not use copper-based algicides in pools or fountains. Control algae with chlorine or other alternatives to copper-based products.



- ❑ Discuss good pollution control practices with all employees at least quarterly.
- ❑ Systematically inform new employees about these best management practices.
- ❑ Post cleanup guidelines and the name of each shift's designated spill cleanup monitor in a visible location.
- ❑ Complete the checklist on the back of this brochure, and share it with employees.

**For more information:**

In East Palo Alto, Los Altos Hills, Palo Alto, and Stanford, call the Regional Water Quality Control Plant (business hours) ..... 329-2598

In Mountain View ..... 903-6378

In Los Altos ..... 948-1491 x230

Santa Clara Valley Water District  
 (business hours) ..... 408/265-2600  
 (evenings,weekends) ..... 408/395-8121

For additional copies of this brochure call the Regional Water Quality Control Plant, 329-2598.

## **BMP #6: Training employees**

*Food handling establishments often have high rates of employee turnover*



## **In case of a spill or emergency...**

*For help stopping spills from flowing to a creek or storm drain, call  
**Emergency  
 Response 911  
 IMMEDIATELY!***

# Checklist for Water Quality Protection

## General Information

1. All management personnel have reviewed this brochure.
2. All employees have been advised of these BMPS.
3. Storm drains are stencilled "No Dumping! Flows to Bay."  
(For stencils, call 800/794-2482.)

Yes No n/a


## Grease Traps/Interceptors

1. A grease trap is located inside the facility.
2. A grease interceptor is located outside the facility.
3. Frequency of pumping/removing grease: every  
\_\_\_\_ weeks, \_\_\_\_ months, \_\_\_\_ years
4. All records of grease pumping are kept for three years, as required by ordinance.
5. The following fixtures are connected to a trap or interceptor:
  - a. Wall- or floor-mounted sinks
  - b. Automatic dishwashers
  - c. Floor drains
  - d. Other \_\_\_\_\_


## Equipment Cleaning

1. The following items are cleaned in such a manner that all washwater goes to the sanitary sewer or is hauled offsite:
  - a. Grease filters
  - b. Floor mats
  - c. Floors (mop water and rinse water)
  - d. Grill(s)
  - e. Other \_\_\_\_\_


## Dumpsters and Recycling Containers

1. Dumpsters and recycling containers are always covered.
2. There are no signs of leaks or missing drain plugs.
3. Spilled materials around garbage containers are picked up regularly.
4. If water is used to clean the area, washwater is collected or directed to the sanitary sewer.


## Spill Response

1. In case of a spill (e.g. grease), absorbents such as cat litter are readily available.
2. Employees are trained:
  - a. To control and clean up spills
  - b. To call for assistance in case of emergencies
