

Landscaping Best Management Practices

The California State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB) Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) general permit requires that municipalities monitor commercial operations for activities that may be contributing to pollution.

Stormwater runoff occurs when rain flows over the ground, parking lots and streets. Stormwater can pick up debris, vegetation, chemicals, dirt, grass clippings, leaves and other pollutants. These pollutants flow directly into the local storm sewer system, through the storm drain system, which flows directly into our rivers, wetlands, lakes and streams. Pollutants that enter a storm drain system untreated flow into these bodies of water that we use for drinking water, swimming, and fishing.

The local Merced Municipal Code Title 15, Division III—Storm Water Management and Discharge Control, 15.50.120 (E.) —Reduction of pollutants in storm water requires:

“Compliance with Best Management Practices. Every person or entity, including the above-listed categories, undertaking any activity or use of premises that may cause or contribute to storm water pollution or contamination or illicit or illegal discharges shall comply with best management practice (BMPs) consistent with the California Storm Water Quality Association (CASQA) Best Management Practice Handbooks or equivalent guidelines.”



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Water Quality
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Stormwater Protection

Landscaping Best Management Practices



Only Rain Down the Drain



Best Management Practices (BMPs) are suggested steps to help prevent stormwater pollution. Slight adjustments to day-to-day activities can assist with this effort. All landscape companies and employees should make every effort to keep pollutants from going down the storm drain by putting the following BMPs into practice.



Landscaping

- Mulch-mow grass whenever possible.
- Sweep grass clippings onto landscaped areas; do not allow them to remain on the pavement or on street.
- Do not allow irrigation systems to over-water; adjust sprinklers accordingly.
- Avoid over spraying of pesticides. Avoid spraying pesticides or fertilizers within 50 feet of any surface of water or storm drainage structure. Only use an approved pesticide for use in or near waterways. Follow all manufacturer's recommendations related to the handling of pesticides and fertilizers.
- Never apply chemicals during or immediately before predicted rain or wind events that exceed 5 MPH.



Spills

- Do not load or unload materials near a storm drain inlet or drainage ditch.
- Do not store mulch, soil, or other landscaping materials in the street or on other impervious surfaces. If they must be stored on impervious surfaces, ensure that they are covered and contained.
- If a spill occurs, control, contain and clean up immediately using dry cleanup practices. Clean and dispose dirty absorbent properly. If the spilled material is hazardous the used cleanup materials are also hazardous and must be sent to a certified laundry or disposed as hazardous waste. If a spill reaches a storm drain system, notify the City of Merced immediately.
- Establish an education program for employees and subcontractors on the potential hazards to humans and the environment from spills and leaks.
- Keep an updated spill prevention plan as changes occur to the types of chemicals stored and used at the facility.



Good Housekeeping

- Keep outdoor areas free from trash, dirt, litter and debris.
- Keep lids closed on dumpsters and recycle containers.
- Keep lawn clippings, leaves and debris out of gutters and street.

Training



- Provide training for your staff to further ensure that every effort is being made to assist in the prevention of stormwater pollution.
- Refer to the Merced Municipal Code Title 15 to find out what local rules may apply. Check the stormwater webpage at www.cityofmerced.org or contact the City of Merced Water Quality Control Division for assistance.

REMEMBER

The residents and business owners of the City of Merced, collectively, have a great influence over the quality of stormwater. Our hope is that this brochure has given you some ideas on how you can be a part of the team to ensure our city is a safe and healthy place to live. This brochure is intended to help get you started.

More information can be found on the City of Merced website at www.cityofmerced.org.