



Preventing Storm Drain Pollution

Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Mobile Graffiti Removal Businesses

Storm Drains and the San Francisco Bay

Graffiti is commonly removed by painting over or pressure washing with solvents. When pollutants from graffiti removal activities, such as wash waters, paint, solvents, sediment, and grit, enter storm drain inlets, they flow through the storm drain system to local waterways and the San Francisco Bay without any cleaning or filtering. These pollutants can be toxic to fish, wildlife, and people and should never enter the storm drain.

Help protect the Bay and local creeks by following these Best Management Practices (BMPs).

General Guidance and Good Housekeeping

- Schedule graffiti removal activities during dry weather.
- Do not allow water used for cleaning to enter storm drains or waterways.
- Cover the storm drains (e.g., storm drain mat, a tarp, or other control measure) prior to removing graffiti from walls, signs, sidewalks, or other structures. This prevents spills of solvents, paint waste, wash water, or other materials from entering storm drains.
- Call the local wastewater agency before discharging wash water to the sanitary sewer to determine if the solvent cleaners, if being used, are acceptable for discharge.
- Consider using a waterless and non-toxic chemical cleaning method for graffiti removal (e.g., gels or spray compounds).
- Remove storm drain covers when job is complete.

BMPs for Painting Over Graffiti

- Use the least toxic materials available (e.g., water-based paints) and test and inspect equipment for leaks prior to starting to paint.
- Transport paint in containers with secure lids.
- Tighten all hoses and connections.
- Do not overfill paint container.
- Cover nearby storm drain inlets prior to painting.
- Do not mix, transfer, or load paint near storm drain inlets.
- Learn about proper disposal options for paint and hazardous waste disposal by contacting the [Very Small Quantity Generator \(VSQG\) Disposal Program](#) at (800) 207-8222, or visit hhw.org to learn more.
- Collect waste after cleaning paint equipment or brushes and put into a bucket or drum with a secure lid for transport back to your facility to be reused, recycled, or disposed of properly.



Only rain down the storm drain.

Never allow wash water to enter storm drains. Federal, State, and local regulations prohibit any discharges other than rain in the storm drain.



What about non-toxic cleaning products?

Cleaning products labeled “non-toxic” can still harm fish and wildlife if they enter a storm drain. Make sure to divert and collect all wash water and contact local programs about proper disposal.

BMPs for Pressure Washing

- If water must be used, use berms or other protective barriers to isolate polluted areas from storm drain inlets. Cover inlets to prevent potential discharges. Collect and dispose of water properly.
- If a graffiti abatement method generates wash water containing a cleaning compound (i.e., high pressure washing with a cleaning compound), call the local wastewater agency before discharging wash water to the sanitary sewer.
 - Collect and dispose of non-hazardous wash waters in sanitary sewer cleanout by vacuuming/pumping.
 - Cleaning solutions that cannot be recycled may need to be disposed of as hazardous waste.



Protect the storm drain

BMPs for Sand Blasting

- Cover nearby storm drain inlets prior to starting work. Storm drain covers and similar control measures should be used to prevent spills or material drift from being deposited into storm drains or waterways.
- Use a sander with a vacuum filter bag.
- Collect solid waste by vacuuming or sweeping and secure in an appropriate container for transport to be recycled or disposed of properly.
- Collect wash water in a tank and pump to the sanitary sewer (after filtering), or dispose as hazardous waste, as directed by the local wastewater agency.
- Clean up afterwards by vacuuming or sweeping thoroughly, and/or by using absorbent. Properly dispose of the absorbent.



Contain paint to prevent spills



Collect all wash water

Stormwater Pollution Control Agencies

For more information on preventing stormwater pollution, contact your local agency.

Campbell, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, Saratoga (West Valley Communities) (408) 354-5385	Mountain View..... (650) 903-6378
Cupertino (408) 777-3354	Palo Alto..... (650) 329-2122
Los Altos..... (650) 947-2770	San José..... (408) 945-3000
Los Altos Hills (650) 941-7222	Santa Clara..... (408) 615-3080
Milpitas (408) 586-3365	Unincorporated Santa Clara County (408) 918-4609
	Sunnyvale..... (408) 730-7260

Wastewater Agencies

All discharges to the sanitary sewer must meet local discharge limits. Contact your local wastewater agency to find out if pretreatment requirements apply to your business.

Cupertino Sanitary District.....	(408) 253-7071
<i>Serving Cupertino</i>	
San José-Santa Clara Regional Wastewater Facility	(408) 945-3000
<i>Serving Campbell, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, San Jose, Santa Clara, Saratoga</i>	
Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant	(408) 730-7270
<i>Serving Sunnyvale</i>	
Regional Water Quality Control Plant	(650) 329-2598
<i>Serving East Palo Alto Sanitary District, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Mountain View, Palo Alto, Stanford</i>	



For more information about Stormwater Pollution Prevention

1-866-WATERSHED

www.MyWatershedWatch.org



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