

Painters

Painters work with products (paint, solvents, paint removers) and processes (preparation, painting, and clean-up) that can introduce pollutants into our environment. If spilled or disposed of improperly, any of these contaminants can pollute our local creeks.

The most important thing to know about sewers and storm drains is that they are two different systems. When wash water, dirt, paint, etc., flows off your property, it flows directly into the storm water drainage system, unless you block it to collect the runoff for correct disposal. The storm water drainage system consists of street gutters, inlets, catch basins, and ditches. Many people believe that storm water gets "cleaned" but it does not. Rather, it flows directly into our creeks, rivers, lakes, and the ocean without any treatment at all. Only the water that goes down a sink, toilet or another inside drain flows to the wastewater treatment plant. Toxic materials cannot be discharged to either system.

As a valued member of the local business community, we know that you are invested in protecting the quality of life that your customers, members of the community, and visitors enjoy.

Job Preparation

- Only schedule projects during dry weather and check on the correct disposal procedure.
- Paint stripping with chemicals must be disposed of as hazardous waste.
- Paint stripping through power-washing will need to be collected in a tank and strained/filtered to remove the paint chips prior to disposal to sanitary sewer.
- Wash water from cleaning a surface without soap or stripping may be discharged to a vegetated area as long as it is large enough to soak in all the runoff.
- The best option for wash water that is not considered a hazardous waste is to dispose of it to a sewer drain.
- Lead based paints (prior to 1972) are considered hazardous materials and require special permitted procedures.
- Paint chips and dust from non-hazardous dry stripping and sand blasting may be swept up and disposed of as trash.
- Chips and dust from marine paints or paint containing lead or tributyl tin are hazardous wastes; dry sweep and call the ECO-DESK HOTLINE at (707) 565-DESK (3375).
- Be prepared by having sufficient materials on hand to deal with paint spills including squeegee/dustpan/large bucket for large spills, rags for small spills, something to block inlets and/or street gutters to protect storm drains, and a wet/dry vac to collect the runoff from rinsing down any spill area.

Do It Right

- Only get as much paint as you will need.
- Cover and protect unused or left over paint.

- Block nearby storm drain inlets in case of accidental spill.
- Never wash down any paint or debris to the storm drain.
- Set-up and operate on tarps or drop cloths for easier clean-up of spilled material, including areas for paint preparation and storage, painting, and clean-up.
- Clean up spills immediately.

Clean Up

- Never hose paint down a street gutter, or storm drain.
- Water-based paints, brushes, rollers, and spray equipment can be cleaned in a bucket or sink, and discharged to the sanitary sewer.
- Very minimal cleaning waste water can be discharged to the ground (never when rain is in the forecast).
- Oil-based paints and solvent cleaners must be treated as hazardous waste.
- Reuse paint thinner by setting thinner aside in a closed jar to settle out paint particles, and then pour off clear liquid for future use. Dispose of residue as hazardous waste.

Paint Transport/Storage

- Store inside or under cover.
- When transporting paint, make sure containers are securely tied in the vehicle to prevent costly spills on the roadway, (a common occurrence).
- Recycle empty, dried-out, water-based paint cans in your blue single-stream recycling cart.
- Avoid buying too much paint to begin with; careful planning can save you money and minimize the need to deal with leftover materials.
- Before cleaning brushes, brush out as much paint as possible.
- Drain and recycle excess paint from spray equipment prior to cleaning with water or solvent.
- Carefully store leftover paint for future use or give it away to someone who can use it.

Are You Ready to Respond to a Spill?

- Have a written plan.
- Train your employees on procedures and equipment use.
- Have your plan and spill cleanup equipment accessible on your work vehicle.
- Know how to handle hazardous materials.
- Have Material Safety Data sheets for any products you are using.