Stormwater BMPs for Post-Fire Site Cleanup

Pollution Prevention Recommendations for Emergency Cleanup Crew

Fire restoration involves cleaning, abating pollutants, repairing, and restoring properties damaged by fire, smoke, as well as water and foam used in emergency firefighting activities. It is important that contractors hired for fire restoration follow practices that prevent pollutants such as **foam, water, ash, contaminated soil, burnt materials, and other debris** from entering the storm drain system. Pollutants from emergency firefighting activities or fire restoration activities that are dumped into the street or storm drain inlets, **flow through the storm drain system to local waterways and the San Francisco Bay (the Bay) without any treatment or filtering**. Chlorinated water, firefighting foams and residual materials from fires can be toxic to fish, wildlife, people, and the environment. Help protect the Bay and local creeks with these Best Management Practices (BMPs).

PROTECT THE BAY

Only Rain Down the Drain!

NEVER let foam, water, or debris enter the storm drain.

WHAT ARE BMPS AND WHY DO THEY MATTER?

Best **M**anagement **P**ractices (BMPs) are proven ways to stop pollution before it starts. They include everyday actions, tools, and site setups that help keep pollutants like ash, debris, foam, and dirty water out of storm drains and local creeks. Some BMPs are as simple as blocking off a drain, while others involve installing barriers or using systematic cleanup strategies. Here's a breakdown:

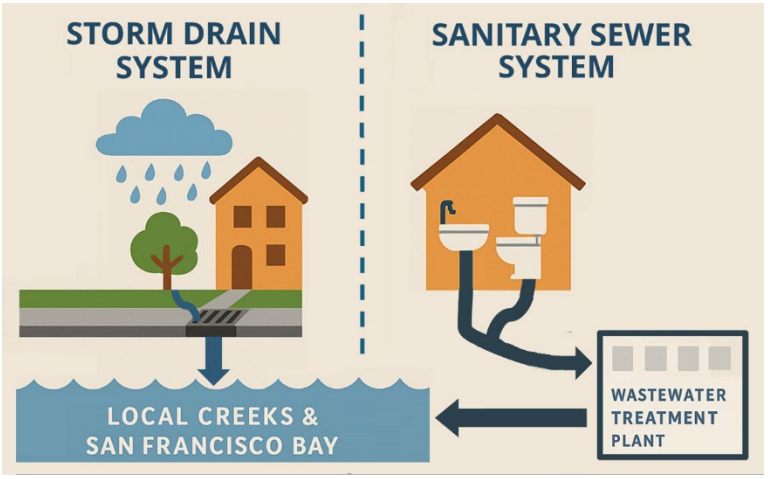
- **Non-Structural BMPs**: Simple practices like sweeping, avoiding work during rain, or posting signs.
- **Structural BMPs**: Physical barriers like berms, wattles, or tarps that reduce or redirect runoff (***Image 1***).
- **Source Control BMPs**: Stops pollution at the source by preventing pollutants from entering the storm drain.
- **Treatment Control BMPs**: Uses filters or systems to remove pollutants from stormwater before it flows to nearby waterways.

Image 1. *Example of a Structural BMP.*

STORM DRAINS VS. SANITARY SEWERS: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

The **Storm Drain System** conveys rainwater from streets and sidewalks to prevent flooding. Pollutants left on the ground flow directly in our creeks and the Bay without treatment.

The **Sanitary Sewer System** directs wastewater from toilets, sinks, and indoor plumbing to a wastewater treatment plant to be treated before being safely released to the environment.



Contra Costa's Report Spills Hotline: 1-800-663-8674

CONTRA COSTA CLEAN WATER PROGRAM
255 Glacier Drive, Martinez, CA 94553 (925) 313-2360 cccleanwater.org

1. PLAN AND PREPARE

- **Train all staff** on stormwater pollution prevention – Remember: **Only Rain Down the Drain!**
- **Identify all storm drain inlets** on or near the site. Determine which need protection and locate low points for potential collection, runoff, or spills.
- **Assess potential pollutants** based on the site type. Common hazards include:
  - Firefighting foam and water
  - Ash and burnt debris
  - Hazardous materials (e.g. batteries, insulation, paints, cleaners, pesticides)
  - Building materials and contaminated soil
- **Avoid driving through the burn site** to prevent tracking pollutants offsite.
- **Determine the right containment and cleanup tools** for the job. Options include vac trucks, shop vacs, holding tanks, wattles, sandbags, caution tape, and absorbents
- **Use secondary containment** around any storage tanks, dumpsters, or collection points to prevent accidental leaks or spills.

2. PREVENT WATER POLLUTION

- **Stop active leaks or runoff** immediately using simple fixes (e.g. plug a hole, upright a tipped container) or containment (e.g. wattles, sandbags).
- **Protect storm drains** by blocking or covering nearby inlets and isolating low points where runoff may collect.
- **Contain and collect** polluted water or foam onsite. Never allow it to enter streets, gutters, or storm drains.
- **Use dry cleanup methods first**: Absorb, sweep, vacuum, or dry-mop before resorting to water (***Image 2***).
- If water is needed, **contain and control** it with berms or barriers, then direct it to a proper collection point using a filtered wet-vac or pump.
- **Store wash water in labeled containers** and use secondary containment to prevent leaks or spills**.**

3. PROPER DISPOSAL

- **Properly dispose of all debris, absorbents, and contaminated materials as hazardous waste or to the landfill** (if allowed). Don't leave anything behind!
- **Check with your local wastewater treatment authority** to determine the appropriate method for disposing of liquid waste. If discharge to the sanitary sewer is not permitted, arrange for off-site disposal in accordance with hazardous waste regulations.
- Once cleanup is complete, **remove all storm drain protections and sweep thoroughly** to ensure no sediment or debris is left behind**.**
- **Inspect nearby storm drains and inlets** to ensure no residual materials have entered the system. If contamination is observed, notify appropriate personnel and respond immediately.

ALWAYS use proper personal protective equipment (PPE) when engaging in post-fire cleanup activities.

Image 2. *Use dry cleanup methods first: Absorb, sweep, vacuum, or dry-mop before resorting to water.*

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Local Stormwater Agencies

City of Antioch	(925) 779-6169
City of Brentwood	(925) 516-5163
City of Clayton	(925) 890-9732
City of Concord	(925) 671-3470
Town of Danville	(925) 314-3315
City of El Cerrito	(510) 215-4338
City of Hercules	(510) 799-8247
City of Lafayette	(925) 299-3247
City of Martinez	(925) 372-3569
Town of Moraga	(925) 888-7038
City of Oakley	(925) 625-7154
City of Orinda	(925) 253-4251
City of Pinole	(510) 724-9839
City of Pittsburg	(925) 252-4803
City of Pleasant Hill	(925) 671-5252
City of Richmond	(510) 621-1269
City of San Pablo	(510) 215-3066
City of San Ramon	(925) 973-2685
City of Walnut Creek	(925) 256-3511
County Watershed Program	(925) 313-2236
Contra Costa Clean Water Program	(925) 313-2360

Local Wastewater Treatment Authorities

Byron Sanitary District (Dist.)	(925) 634-3613
Central Contra Costa Sanitary Dist.	(925) 229-7288
City of Brentwood	(925) 516-6060
City of Hercules	(510) 724-8963
City of Pinole	(510) 724-8963
City of Richmond	(510) 412-2009
Crockett Sanitary Department	(510) 787-2992
Delta Diablo Sanitation Dist.	(925) 756-1900
Dublin San Ramon Serv. Dist.	(925) 875-2336
East Bay Municipal Utility Dist.	(510) 287-1651
Ironhouse Sanitary Dist.	(925) 625-2279
Mt. View Sanitary Dist.	(925) 228-5635
Rodeo Sanitary Dist.	(510) 799-2970
Town of Discovery Bay CSD	(925) 634-1131
West County Wastewater Dist.	(510) 237-6603