

# Preventing Pollution: It's Up to Us

In the Santa Clara Valley, storm drains transport water directly to local creeks and San Francisco Bay without treatment. Stormwater pollution is a serious problem for wildlife dependent on our waterways and for the people who live near polluted streams or baylands. Some common sources of this pollution include spilled oil, fuel, and fluids from vehicles and heavy equipment; construction debris; sediment created by erosion, landscaping runoff containing pesticides or weed killers; and materials such as used motor oil, antifreeze, and paint products that people pour or spill into a street or storm drain.

Thirteen valley municipalities have joined together with Santa Clara County and the Santa Clara Valley Water District to educate local residents and businesses to prevent stormwater pollution. Join us, by following the practices described in this pamphlet.

## Doing the Job Right

### General Business Practices

- Schedule excavation and grading work during dry weather.
- Prevent sediment from migrating offsite and protect storm drain inlets, drainage courses, and streams, with appropriate BMPs (i.e., gravel rolls, silt fences, temporary swales, etc).
- Properly monitor and maintain all erosion and sediment controls.
- Follow the State's General Construction Activity Stormwater Permit requirements regarding uncontaminated ground water if your construction site disturbs one (1) acre or more of soil ([http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/stormwater/construction.shtml](http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/stormwater/construction.shtml)).

## Storm Drain Pollution from Dewatering

Contaminated groundwater is a common problem in the Santa Clara Valley. Depending on soil types and site history, groundwater pumped from construction sites may be contaminated with toxics (such as oil or solvents) or laden with sediments. Any of these pollutants can harm wildlife in creeks or the Bay, or interfere with wastewater treatment plant operation.

**Discharging sediment-laden water from a dewatering site into any water of the state without treatment is prohibited.**

### Dewatering Operations

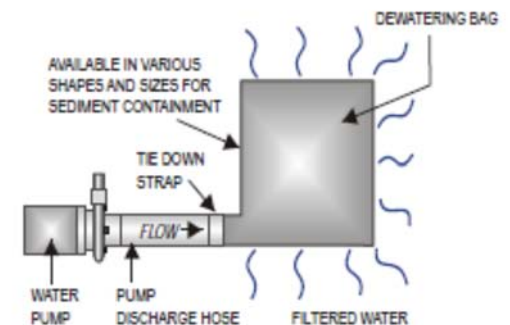
Discharges of groundwater or captured runoff from dewatering operations must be properly managed and disposed. When possible send dewatering discharge to landscaped area or sanitary sewer. If discharging to the sanitary sewer call your local wastewater treatment plant. Divert run-on water from offsite away from all disturbed areas.

#### 1. Check for Toxic Pollutants

- Check for odors, discoloration, or an oily sheen on groundwater.
- Call your local wastewater treatment agency and ask whether the groundwater must be tested if discharging to sanitary sewer.
- If contamination is suspected, have the water tested by a certified laboratory for likely pollutants.
- Depending on the test results, you may be allowed to discharge pumped groundwater (if no sediments present) to the sanitary sewer system. OR, you may be required to collect and haul pumped groundwater offsite for treatment and disposal at an appropriate treatment facility.

#### 2. Check for Sediment Levels

- If the water is clear, the pumping time is less than 24 hours, and the flow rate is less than 20 gallons per minute, you may pump water to the street or storm drain.
- If the pumping time is more than 24 hours and the flow rate greater than 20 gpm, call your local wastewater treatment plant for guidance.
- If the water is not clear, solids must be filtered or settled out (e.g. by pumping to a settling tank) prior to discharge. Options for filtering include:
  - Pumping through a perforated pipe sunk part way into a small pit filled with gravel;
  - Pumping from a bucket placed below water level using a submersible pump;
  - Pumping through a filtering device such as a swimming pool filter or filter fabric wrapped around the end of the suction pipe.
- When discharging to a storm drain, protect the inlet using a barrier of burlap bags filled with drain rock, or cover inlet with filter fabric anchored under the grate. OR pump water through a grassy swale prior to discharge. Refer to the CASQA *Construction BMP Online Handbook* ([www.casqa.org/resources/bmp-handbooks](http://www.casqa.org/resources/bmp-handbooks)) for dewatering control measures.



Picture Source: CASQA Stormwater BMP Handbook Portal NS-2 Fact Sheet

## Small Business Hazardous Waste Disposal Program

Businesses that generate less than 27 gallons or 220 pounds of hazardous waste per month are eligible to use Santa Clara County's Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generator Program. Call (800) 207-8222 for a quote, more information or guidance on disposal.

Palo Alto operates a similar program, with monthly collection, for small businesses. Call the City of Palo Alto, (650) 496-6980, or Clean Harbors, 1-800-433-5060 for information or to schedule an appointment.

This brochure is one in a series of pamphlets describing storm drain pollution prevention measures for specific types of construction industry activities. Other pamphlets include:

### ***General Construction and Site Supervision***

### ***Landscaping and Gardening***

### ***Fresh Concrete and Mortar Application***

### ***Painting and Application of Solvents and Adhesives***

### ***Roadwork and Paving***

### ***Earth-Moving and Heavy Equipment Operation***

### ***Home Repair and Remodeling***

For additional brochures, call **1-800-794-2482**



## Spill Response Agencies:

1. In the City of Santa Clara, call (408) 615-3080.
2. In the City of Palo Alto, call (650) 329-2413.
3. In the City of San José, dial 9-1-1 if hazardous materials enter the storm drain system. For non-hazardous spills, call (408) 945-3000.
4. In other cities, find the contact number at [www.scvurppp-w2k.com/report\\_spill.shtml](http://www.scvurppp-w2k.com/report_spill.shtml) or **DIAL 9-1-1**
5. State Office of Emergency Services Warning Center (24 hours). . . . . **1-800-852-7550**
6. Santa Clara County's Illegal Dumping/ Discharge Hotline. . . . . (408) 918-3400

## Local Pollution Control Agencies

County of Santa Clara Integrated Waste Management Program. . . . . (408) 282-3180

County of Santa Clara District Attorney Environmental Crimes Hotline. . . . (408) 299-TIPS

Santa Clara County Recycling Hotline. . . . . 1-800-533-8414

Santa Clara Valley Water District. . . . . (408) 265-2600

Santa Clara Valley Water District Pollution Hotline. . . . . 1-888-510-5151

San José-Santa Clara Regional Wastewater Facility. . . . . (408) 635-6600  
*Serving Campbell, Cupertino, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, San Jose, Santa Clara, Saratoga*

Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant  
*Serving Sunnyvale. . . . . (408) 730-7270*

Regional Water Quality Control Plant. . . . . (650) 329-2598  
*Serving East Palo Alto Sanitary District, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Mountain View, Palo Alto, Stanford*

Regional Water Quality Control Board San Francisco Bay Region. . . . . (510) 622-2300

# Dewatering Activities

## *Best Management Practices (BMPs) for the Construction Industry*



Picture Source: CASQA Stormwater BMP Handbook Portal NS-2 Fact Sheet

## Who should use this brochure?

- Site supervisors
- General contractors
- Home builders
- Developers