

## What's the Problem?

### Why is Water Pollution Prevention Important?

It's in everyone's best interest to reduce the amount of chemicals and hazardous substances that flow into the sewer system. It's good for the earth, it's good for our pocketbooks and it's good for our communities.

**Sanitary Sewers.** We have to be careful about what goes into sanitary sewers. Even the best sewage treatment facility has limitations. Oregon's sewage treatment systems are designed primarily to handle sanitary sewage. Bacteria provide "treatment" by breaking down organic matter in the water. Treatment facilities can't treat many chemicals, so they pass untouched into the environment. Chemicals can also destroy the bacteria necessary in the treatment process.

**Storm Sewers.** Our storm drains flow directly into rivers and streams, without passing through a treatment plant. Anything in the storm drain—from leaves to motor oil—can contribute to waste pollution.



### How Can Pollution Prevention Help Businesses' Bottom Line?

Businesses find that taking steps to prevent pollution actually saves money.



- Cutting back on chemical use can reduce material costs as well as waste disposal fees.
- Reducing water use means less water down the drain—and lower sewer fees.
- Reducing chemical use can create a safer workplace, with fewer accidents and lower insurance costs.
- We will all pay if we need to build more treatment system capacity. We all save by keeping materials out of the sewer system.

### REMEMBER:

Using your local storm water catch basins for improper disposal of wastes is not only harmful to the environment but also illegal and punishable by law. Springfield Municipal Code 5.002 and 5.274.

For more information on stormwater safety visit the Environmental Protection Agency at:

<http://www.epa.gov/>

or, visit the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality at:

<http://www.deq.state.or.us/>



City of Springfield  
Public Works Department  
Environmental Services Division  
225 Fifth St.  
Springfield, OR 97477  
(541) 726-3694  
(541) 726-2309 (fax)  
[www.ci.springfield.or.us](http://www.ci.springfield.or.us)



### Stormwater Safety for Auto Shops

### Auto Shop Tips for Protecting Ground Water

Next to physicians and TV repair folks, Americans revere auto mechanics above all service providers. Service stations and auto repair shops are essential to the American way of life.

Because of the nature of these businesses, they also can contribute significant amounts of water pollution to local rivers and streams. Automotive products like motor oil and solvents endanger water quality and cannot be treated by sewage treatment facilities.

Oregonians have responded to environmental concerns by keeping cars tuned up and by recycling motor oil. In addition, the automotive industry has been working aggressively to reduce its impact on the environment by promoting recycling and reuse of chemicals and by promoting other actions that keep toxins out of the environment.

Still, the sheer number of cars on the roads today and those receiving repairs and maintenance represents a threat to clean water, so that each person working around automobiles must be double cautious to keep pollutants out of the storm and sanitary sewers.

## Steps to Pollution Prevention

1. Know where your waste water goes—does the drain lead to a sanitary sewer and a wastewater treatment facility, or does the water flow directly to a natural body of water? If you find you are sending wastewater directly to a river, stream or lake, you will want to take extra precautions.



2. Keep vehicle fluids and other hazardous wastes out of the sewer system. Store them in well-marked containers for recycling or for disposal at an appropriate facility.
3. Prevent spills leaks and drips. Keep oil, grease, solvents and other chemicals out of storm and sanitary drains.
  - ◆ Use solvents only over self-contained sinks or tanks.
  - ◆ Prevent leaks in solvent tanks, inspect tanks for leaks and repair any immediately.
  - ◆ Allow cleaned engines and parts to dry over the hot tank.
  - ◆ Catch fluid from leaking vehicles in a drip pan,

and use drip pans whenever you are changing fluids in a car.

4. Do not allow wastewater from steam-cleaning to flow into storm drains. It must be diverted to the sanitary sewer system.
5. Do you need floor drains? If you are not washing parts or vehicles, or have other uses for the drain, consider plugging the shop floor sewer drains, thereby preventing discharges to sewers.
6. Recycle motor oil, batteries, solvents, paints, oil filters, antifreeze, and lubricants. Be aware of any materials you use that are considered hazardous substances, and follow all regulations related to their storage, use or disposal.
7. Keep dust from sanding and Bondo out of the sewers by:
  - ◆ Sweeping up, not hosing down dust;
  - ◆ Allowing debris from wet sanding to dry out over-night before sweeping it up;
  - ◆ Purchasing sanders with an attached vacuum to

- ◆ reduce clean-up time; and
  - ◆ Disposing non-hazardous dust in the garbage.
9. Keep batteries and chemical containers dry and off the ground to prevent leaks into storm water.
  10. Drain and collect fluids from stored vehicles that are being dismantled. Reuse or recycle collected fluids.
  11. Inspect, maintain and clean all pollution prevention equipment regularly. Separators and grease traps should be cleaned at least every three months.
  12. Dry-sweep areas around fuel-dispensing islands.
  13. After Pollution Prevention techniques, the best way to assure that pollutants stay out of the sewer system is to invest in a self-contained wastewater recycling system. Ultimately, this cuts down water and sewer bills and guarantees that businesses are not contributing to water quality.



## Good Housekeeping

- ✓ **Be conscious of chemical use.** Even the least toxic chemicals can be harmful if used incorrectly. Don't be careless about any aspect of chemicals—from initial use to disposal.
- ✓ **Reduce chemical use whenever possible.** Many businesses have found that they have saved money by adopting new procedures that require less chemical use.
- ✓ **Use good housekeeping practices.**
  - Sweep, vacuum and mop floors rather than hosing them down. Don't leave sweepings outside where rain can wash them into storm drains and don't send wash water down storm drains.
  - Clean up spills immediately.
  - Sweep parking lots in the fall, before the rains come.



- ✓ **Store chemicals and liquids sensibly.**
  - Store chemicals so they can be found and identified easily.
  - Follow manufacturers' directions for all product storage.
  - Consider requirements for temperature, air circulation, length of time and other storage factors.
  - Avoid purchasing products that won't be used by purchasing smaller quantities, more frequently.
  - Provide secondary containment for all liquids. Place original containers inside a pan, jar or bottle capable of capturing all the contents in case of a leak. Place large containers on spill control pallets or totes.

- ✓ **Spill prevention and control.**
  - Use chemicals only in designated areas where spills can be contained.
  - Avoid moving chemicals long distances from storage to use.
  - When cleaning up spills, remove liquids with rags and sweep the floor with a dry absorbent; pour mop water into an oil/water separator before sending it down the drain. Keep absorbent materials on hand to handle different types of substances. Properly dispose of rags and absorbents.
- ✓ **Train employees.** All employees—whether or not they work with chemicals—should receive training about the products in use, storage requirements, spill procedures and potential hazards.