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## Why is concrete a problem?

Concrete work creates wastes that can harm people, waterways, plants, fish and other wildlife if handled or discarded improperly. When these wastes solidify or build up in the stormwater lines, they block the drainage flow and cause localized flooding which results in property damage and unsafe driving conditions.

When fresh concrete and cement-related mortars enter the stormwater collection system, they're carried untreated directly into local streams and rivers. Here they can harm aquatic animals, fish, plants, as well as affecting downstream drinking water sources.

Most concrete workers manage wastes responsibly, but sometimes disposal options can be confusing. This brochure is designed to help you protect water quality and avoid penalties for your business. The result will be happier customers who appreciate your concern for their property and a safer environment.

## Why should you care?

Aside from causing environmental damage, improper disposal of concrete, cement-related mortars and concrete/cement wastes violates state and local laws and could lead to costly fines and penalties. It is against federal, state and local law to discharge non-stormwater substances, including biodegradable substances, into the stormwater collection system, which includes street gutters, storm drains and open channels.

## What can you do?

### **Plan ahead**

- Pour concrete, asphalt and seal coat during dry weather, if possible, so they can cure before stormwater flows across them, picking up pollutants and wastes, on its way to local creeks and waterways.
- Both at the yard and the construction site, store dry and wet materials under cover, protected from wind, rainfall and runoff.
- Securely close bags of cement after they are open. Keep wind-blown cement powder away from gutters, storm drains, rainfall and runoff.
- Check with the general contractor to see if there is a designated wash out area located on-site.
- Place straw bales or other erosion prevention methods down slope to capture runoff carrying mortar or cement before it can reach a storm drain or waterway.
- If you're mixing your own materials, mix up only the amount of fresh concrete or cement that you will use in a day. If you're using a concrete delivery service, encourage them to practice methods to protect water quality as described in this brochure.

## **What can you do? (Continued)**

### **Prepare the site**

- Cover catch basins and manholes when applying seal coat, slurry seal, fog seal, etc., or when performing saw cut operations.
- Discard the spilled material in the trash. Be prepared to contain all washwater on soil, preferably in a bowl-shaped area, to prevent it from leaving the washout area.
- Set up and operate small mixers on tarps or heavy plastic drop cloths to collect spills. Discard the spilled material in the trash.
- Designate an appropriate washout area on site and brief all concrete workers on its location and use.

### **During Construction**

- Shovel or vacuum saw-cut slurry and remove from the site. Do not allow it to flow into stormwater drains or open drainage ways where it ends up in local waterways.
- Wash down exposed aggregate concrete only when the wash water can flow onto a dirt area or drain onto a bermed surface from which it can be pumped and disposed of properly.
- Never wash sweepings from exposed aggregate concrete into a street or storm drain. Collect and return to aggregate base stockpile or dispose in trash.
- When breaking asphalt or concrete, control excess dust using a small amount of water and control runoff. Remove all chunks and pieces from the site and recycle as fill or pay dumping fees at Lane County's Glenwood Central Receiving Station for small amounts. Left in the street or pushed over a bank into a creek bed or stream, concrete debris may cause major problems for flood control, storm drain maintenance and the health of our environment.

### **Clean Up**

- Place all excess concrete in a form, box, or designated washout area where it may be removed when it is hardened. Clean all finishing tools in the washout area.
- Use the minimum amount of water to wash the chute, finishing tools and any other equipment.
- Wash out concrete mixers, pumping equipment and concrete finishing tools only in designated washout areas where the water will flow into containment ponds or onto dirt. Whenever possible, recycle washout by pumping it back into mixers for reuse. Never dispose of washout into the street, storm drains, drainage ditches or streams.
- After driveway or sidewalk construction, wash fine particles onto dirt areas, not down the driveway or into the street or storm drain.
- Dispose of small amounts of excess dry concrete, grout and mortar in the trash.
- Never bury waste material where it can leach into groundwater and contaminate drinking water sources.