



From Home Improvement Projects

Clean creeks are important. They provide vital fish habitat, recreation, and add to the beauty of our City. In recent years while industrial pollution has decreased, the family home continues to be a leading source of water pollution. People caring for their homes can unknowingly pollute local waterways through the improper handling and disposal of household chemicals, paint, and trash. Through inattention or carelessness, materials swept, raked, or spilled on the ground or pavement can be carried by water into our local creeks. The gutters along our City streets lead to storm drains that flow directly to local creeks-what you do in and around your home has a direct impact on your local waterways, many times a negative impact.

Concrete and Masonry Work

Fresh concrete, mortar and grout can wash or blow into the street gutter or storm drain, polluting our creeks. If you are planning concrete or masonry work these tips will help both you and your waterways:

- Only mix up as much concrete or cement as you will need
- Cover and protect unused and left over bags
- Sweep up dry materials such as cement, sand, gravel, and dirt-don't let these blow or wash away into the street
- Don't wash off haze from concrete or grout with water or acid into the street or storm drain
- Don't hose excess concrete into the street gutter (this includes washing off equipment, mixing containers, or the construction site)
- Empty excess concrete into a dirt area or into a container to allow material to dry before putting it in the trash
- Set-up and operate small mixers on heavy tarps or drop cloths for easier clean-up of spilled material

Barbeques

The burnt food residue that builds up on the grill is poisonous to animals in the creeks, even in low concentrations. Avoid cleaning off grills onto paved areas which will rinse into the gutters and creeks.

Job Site Clean-Up

Now that your project is done-don't spoil it! Waste from overflowing trash cans contains toxins that can be carried to our creeks. Sweep up loose materials and place them in the trash. Some projects may require a larger trash bin. Households in Santa Rosa can call the garbage company for a free dumpster bin at (707) 586-1478. Home improvement waste includes: sheetrock mud, tile and counter top cuttings, and general trash. Property owners are ultimately responsible for the introduction of pollutants to the storm drain system.

Responsible Power Washing

A power-washer is often used for painting preparation. The problem is there is a lot besides water in the runoff from pressure washing. If the wastewater is not collected properly, this pollution will flow into a storm drain. Water entering a storm drain is not cleaned before entering our creeks and rivers.

Always pre-clean the area to be cleaned by sweeping up litter, dirt, and other debris before power washing. Then dispose of wash water by collecting the wash water and dumping it into the sanitary sewer through a sink, toilet or sewer clean-out. This will ensure the wash water will be sent to the wastewater treatment plant for treatment and reuse. If hazardous materials (petroleum products, fuels, antifreeze, solvents, and pesticides) are involved, the water will need to be disposed of as hazardous waste and cannot be discharged to the sanitary sewer.

Collect water for disposal by creating a barrier with sand bags or seal the storm drain openings with rubber mats. Collect wastewater from its containment using a wet/dry vacuum or a sump pump. Rinse the area to ensure any pollutants left on the pavement will be picked up.

Use rags or an absorbent material like kitty litter to remove any oil, grease, or other petroleum products leaked or staining any pavement. Collect the rags and absorbent material for disposal at the Household Toxics Facility. Discharging power washing waste water to a landscaped area may be allowed if no soaps are used you have checked the slope and area to be sure you will avoid runoff into a street or gutter. If the soil is very dry, wet it down thoroughly before discharging so that wash water will soak into the soil instead of running off to the street, gutter, or storm drain. The planted area must be able to absorb all the water you divert to it.

Contact Information

- For more information on storm water and the City's storm drain system call the City of Santa Rosa's Utilities Department at (707) 543-4200, and ask for Storm Water.
- For proper disposal questions on hazardous materials and recycling call Eco-Desk at (707) 565-DESK (3375), or visit Recycle Now.
- If spilled material reaches the storm drain system call (707) 543-3800 to report it.
- If spilled material contains hazardous materials call 911 or (707) 528-5151.
- For more information about obtaining a Wastewater Discharge Permit, visit Santa Rosa Environmental Compliance section or call (707) 543-3369.
- Information on proper storage/disposal of hazardous materials contact the Santa Rosa Fire Department at (707) 543-3500.