

Dumpster Management and Outside Storage

Some businesses store equipment, waste and bulk materials outside. Many businesses have dumpsters, compactors or refuse bins. These containers are typically kept behind buildings or in alleys, where they are often out of sight of customers and the general public.

Commercial refuse containers may be a major source of stormwater pollution if they are not properly operated and maintained. Open dumpsters may collect rain water that mixes with the contents of the dumpster. The polluted water often spills or leaks when the container is emptied. Rain may wash leaking materials, spills and trash from dumpsters and compactors into storm drains. Wash water from cleaning refuse receptacles and loading docks is another source of stormwater pollution. Runoff may contain grease, litter, bacteria, pathogens and chemicals. Properly maintaining dumpsters and cleaning loading docks may prevent unsightly conditions and unpleasant odors.

Building repair, maintenance and remodeling projects also often require temporary outside storage of materials and equipment. Unprotected outdoor storage areas may be a source of pollutants, including sediment, chemicals, nutrients, oil, grease or concrete. Providing protective cover is a simple and effective way to prevent pollution. Temporary tarps, plastic sheeting or tents may be used, or more sturdy long-term structures such as sheds, roofs or canopies are effective.

TO PREVENT WATER POLLUTION

- Minimize the amount of equipment, materials, construction debris and wastes stored outside. Whenever possible, store these items indoors.
- Keep equipment, materials, and containers, including open bags of cement, covered to prevent exposure to rain and runoff.
- Check equipment for leaks and clean up any that occur.
- Clearly label all chemical and storage containers and store away from storm drains.
- Inspect dumpsters and compactors regularly for leaks and the area nearby for litter or stains (at least once a week).
- Replace leaking dumpsters, waste containers and compactors as soon as possible. Call your waste management contractor for a replacement.
- Control litter by making sure waste is contained in dumpsters and compactors. Sweep loading dock area regularly and place sweepings in the trash.



TROUBLED WATERS

Consider what materials and pollutants may be present before you wash anything down a storm drain. Only clean water is allowed into the storm drain, which ends up in our local streams and the Potomac River, a source of our drinking water.



One gallon of oil in the storm drain can pollute up to one million gallons of storm water!

- Increase receptacle service frequency if capacity is routinely exceeded.
- Avoid or minimize placing liquid waste, grease or leaky garbage bags into dumpsters. Place liquid waste in closed (or sealed) containers for disposal.
- Avoid hosing out the dumpster interior. Apply absorbent materials such as kitty litter over any liquids spilled in the dumpster and dispose of them in the trash.
- Keep dumpster lids tightly closed to keep rainwater out and prevent leaks. Replace damaged or missing lids.
- Do not place hazardous waste in a dumpster. Lock the dumpster or enclosure to prevent illegal disposal of hazardous materials.
- Some cleaning materials may contain hazardous waste. Check labels to determine if cleaning materials should be treated as hazardous waste and properly disposed.
- Post signs that indicate the materials that can be placed in the container. Check regularly for unacceptable materials.
- If practical, keep dumpsters and compactors in a covered area.
- Berms or curbs around dumpsters and loading docks can be used to contain leaks, spills and trash. Collect any wash water with a wet vacuum system. Call the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services Industrial Waste Section at 703-550-9740 ext. 252, TTY 711 for information on the proper disposal of the dirty wash water, or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/wastewater.
- Install a water quality management device to treat runoff from the dumpster area such as a filter sock to trap sediment and debris.



Keep dumpsters and compactors in a covered area. If this is not practical, ensure covers on each receptacle are closed.



Use secondary containment to capture any leaks or spills.



Department of Public Works and Environmental Services
 Stormwater Planning Division
 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 449, Fairfax, VA 22035-0052
 703-324-5500, TTY 711 / SWPDmail@fairfaxcounty.gov
 To request this information in an alternate format call 703-324-5500,
 TTY 711. A Fairfax County, VA., publication April 2018