

BEST PRACTICES



Preventing Stormwater Pollution

Spills can be a threat to human health and safety and cause costly damage to our stormwater systems. While going about our day-to-day lives, we pass through many parts of the community where we might see a spill. It could be an oil slick along the road, mud or debris tracked out from an active construction site, leaking dumpster juice, soapy wash water, restaurant oil, and the list goes on. Sometimes we may see these situations, and not be sure what to do. Who do we call? What do we say? Is it even worth reporting?

When in doubt, just remember “if you see something, say something.” Every time.

Here's why:

Spills can easily move into our stormwater systems (ditches, swales, catch basins, ponds) and drain into our lakes and streams carried by stormwater (rainfall, snow melt), posing risk to human health, aquatic habitat, and wildlife like salmon, Orcas, and amphibians.

If spills reach stormwater systems or surface water, this becomes what is called an “illicit discharge”—an illegal and damaging situation for our community. The goal is to catch spills and clean them up BEFORE they can pollute our lakes, streams, drinking water, and Puget Sound!

Tips for cleaning up small spills around your home:

Small spills of paints, stains, vehicle fluid, and household/yard chemicals can be safely cleaned up by your family at home. Keep a storage bin of kitty litter, paper towels, and heavy-duty garbage bags in your garage for responding to these incidents. Personal protection equipment like rubber gloves can also be helpful.

1. Use sand, kitty litter, and/or paper towels to soak up the spill.
2. Sweep cleanup materials into a heavy-duty garbage bag, tie off, and put in trash.

You help prevent water pollution, keeping our lakes and creeks clean, when you report a spill!



Reporting spills:

1. If it looks hazardous—call 911 immediately!
2. Report the spill to the jurisdiction's spill line if the spill is unmanageable by the responsible party with a potential to enter the right of way. The right of way includes streets, sidewalks, ditches, road shoulders, etc.
3. Include the following: Your contact info, what spilled, how much, and the location. Be specific. Sharing photos is also super helpful!

If you see someone dumping anything into the storm drain, report this right away! Only rain is allowed down the storm drain.

To report spills:

In Lacey: 360-491-5644

Olympia: 360-753-8333

Tumwater: 360-754-4150

Thurston County: 360-867-2099

Source: Stream Team News, Winter 2023