

Storm Water Best Management Practices For FIRE DEPARTMENTS & DISTRICTS

STORM WATER PROTECTION



Typical pollutants found on roadways in southern Arizona include metals (lead, copper, zinc, cadmium, etc.), sediment, oil, solvents, and grease. These pollutants can be mobilized by firefighting activities, spills, or emergency spill response cleanups and can be transported to storm drains or washes. This fact sheet provides some Best Management Practices (BMPs) for municipal and county firefighters to use when fighting fires and responding to emergency spills. It also identifies BMPs for day-to-day activities at Department/District facilities.

Chemicals from car and/or engine fires or spills of hazardous substances can contaminate streets, washes, and storm water. If wastewater from fire fighting or emergency cleanup activities enters storm drains or washes, contaminants can eventually reach surface waters. In most jurisdictions, wastewater from firefighting activities is allowed to discharge to the storm drainage system provided the wastewater is not a source of pollutants. Emergency services should protect storm drains whenever possible, especially when responding to spills.

ACTIVITY	BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES
Firefighting and Emergency Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When encountering liquid spills, stop the source of the spill and block storm drain inlets, drainage ditches, or washes. • Never flush or hose down non-hazardous or hazardous spills into storm drains or washes. • Use dry cleanup methods or absorbent material, when possible. • Be aware of storm drains, drainage ways, and washes during firefighting activities. Protect storm drains and washes when possible.
Fire Suppression / Sprinkler System Inspections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If possible, discharge water systems (lines and valves) to the sanitary sewer or to landscaping, not to parking lots, storm drains, or washes. • When performing a “main drain” or “pump test,” direct water flow to landscaping if possible. • Discharge from dry chemical suppression systems must be disposed of properly.
Vehicle Washing & Repair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash vehicles only in a designated wash area that drains to the sanitary sewer or take vehicles to city-operated car washes. Do not wash vehicles in the parking lot or driveway. • Do not hose-down outdoor areas at Department/District facilities except where wash water will only enter the sanitary sewer. • Perform maintenance or repair work inside, if possible. • Do not store leaking vehicles outdoors.
Pollution Prevention Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not hose down outdoor work areas or waste container storage areas at Department/District facilities except where washwater will enter the sanitary sewer.
Illicit Discharges ADEQ Emergency Response / 800-234-5677 or 520-260-2835	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of signs of illicit discharges or connections (i.e., liquids other than rain water flowing into storm drains or washes) including dry weather flows, and pipes/hoses emptying into storm drain inlets. • Report potentially illicit discharges to the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) Emergency Response Duty Office [800-234-5677] or the ADEQ—Southern Regional Office Emergency Response Line [520-260-2835].

For more information, contact the Pima County Department of Environmental Quality (PDEQ) -- Storm Water Program at 520-740-3340.

This fact sheet was developed from a brochure entitled “Stormwater Best Management Practices for Fire Departments & Districts, Stormwater Protection,” which was jointly prepared by: WASH (a Colorado organization consisting of a partnership of communities in the Boulder and Saint Vrain watersheds); and the PACE Program, which provides education and recognition for environmental achievement to businesses and municipalities in Boulder County and portions of Weld County, Colorado.