

## Take care of our ocean, beaches and creeks!



Whether your business or home is two blocks or twenty miles from the water, it has two

connections to the Monterey Bay. Indoor drains such as sinks, toilets, and most floor drains convey wastewater through the sanitary sewer system to a treatment plant. The wastewater is then treated before it is discharged, approximately one mile away from shore into the Bay. Outside your business, rainwater and wash water from buildings, road surfaces, vehicles, and equipment pick up pollutants such as oil, grease, cleaning compounds, pesticides, paint, and garbage. Storm drains carry these pollutants through the storm drain system directly into local creeks and the Bay. Water in storm drains is not filtered or treated in any way. **Only rain should enter a storm drain!**



### Carpet Cleaning:

### Best Environmental Management Practices

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#### For more information:

<http://www.dpw.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/environment.htm>

Santa Cruz County Department of Public Works  
(831) 454-2160

Santa Cruz County Sanitation District  
(831) 477-3907

Santa Cruz County Environmental Health  
(831) 454-2022



County of Santa Cruz  
Department of Public Works

## Carpet Cleaning Best Environmental Management Practices



*Become familiar with environmental laws regarding your business.*

## Proper Wastewater Disposal

**Wastewater from carpet cleaning cannot be discharged into streets, gutters, storm drains or any surface water. It is against the law. Violators are subject to penalties.**

Determine where you are going to discharge wastewater **before** starting a new job. Get permission from the site owner to discharge at the chosen location. Dispose of wastewater in one of the following ways:

- Filter the wastewater to remove solids before discharging into the sanitary sewer (shower, sink, or toilet). Failure to filter the wastewater will result in clogging of your clients sewer pipes, as well as public sewer pipes. Dispose of filter solids in the garbage, provided the carpet was not contaminated with hazardous materials.

**OR**

- Collect the wastewater in a tank and transport the water back to your facility to filter and discharge as above.

Check with the manufacturer of your equipment for the appropriate filters. Minimizing water use means less water to dispose of later.

## Cleaning Products

Generally, steam cleaning of carpets with water is adequate. Avoid using industrial strength cleaners or spot cleaners as these products have high levels of toxicity. Soaps and washing sodas leave films on carpets that can attract more soiling in the long run. Spill response materials should be kept near where chemicals are stored and used.

*There are companies that provide spill response supplies. They can usually be found on the internet..*



Even biodegradable soaps are toxic to many forms of aquatic life! Biodegradable soaps make contact with sensitive ecosystems before completely biodegrading.

**Look for less toxic soaps like those that have the “Green Seal” or “Design for the Environment” labels.**



**Look for the label!**

## Employee Training

Employee training is essential in order to ensure compliance with these Best Environmental Management Practices (BEMPs). This pamphlet has been developed to help you manage wastes associated with carpet cleaning wastewater which will keep our local waterways free from harmful contaminants. Use this pamphlet as a tool to train employees on best management practices.

## Resources and References

The Western Sustainability and Pollution Prevention Network has information available for janitorial and carpet cleaning companies. Some of that information was used in this pamphlet. For more information, visit:

<http://wsppn.org/pdf/janitorial/factsheets/carpetcleaning.htm>

Additional Resources:

California Stormwater Quality Association:  
[http://www.cabmphandbooks.com/Documents/industrial/MobileCleaning\\_CarpetUpholstery.pdf](http://www.cabmphandbooks.com/Documents/industrial/MobileCleaning_CarpetUpholstery.pdf)