

# Protecting Water Quality

## . . . at the Workplace

### It's Everyone's Responsibility

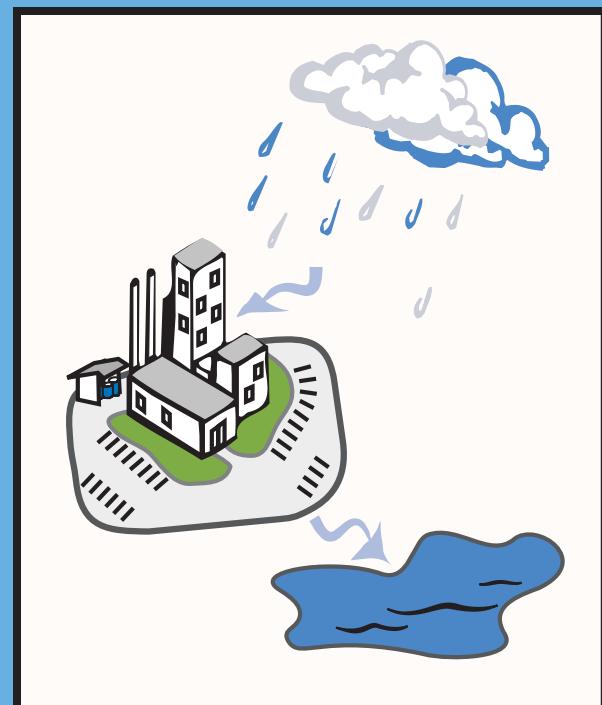
#### Stormwater Runoff and Water Pollution

When it rains, stormwater flows over impervious surfaces such as rooftops, streets, driveways, and parking lots. The runoff collects pollutants, such as oils, fertilizers, pesticides, cleaners, and other chemicals.

Even if your workplace is not near a stream, river, or lake, the runoff will flow into a storm drain or ditch that eventually empties into the closest body of water, taking pollutants along with it. Stormwater runoff is the leading source of water pollution in our community.

Illicit discharge is defined as any discharge to the stormwater system that is not composed entirely of stormwater, except for discharge allowed by permit or waters used for fire fighting operations. Federal regulations require communities to detect and eliminate illicit discharge.

Many commercial activities can contribute to stormwater pollution. You can help by simply preventing chemical spills, using proper cleaning techniques, maintaining landscapes responsibly, and educating employees. Good housekeeping practices are essential to help keep pollutants out of our lakes and streams.



#### Spill Prevention

- All containers, even empty ones, should be labeled and stored properly.
- Utilize proper storage and disposal facilities. Improper storage of materials could lead to accidents or spills. Even residue from open containers or corrosive metal parts can runoff into the storm drain.
- Inspect and monitor all vehicles and heavy equipment frequently for leaks.
- Inspect containers for signs of corrosion on a regular basis, and replace as necessary.
- If spills occur, use dry absorbent materials (such as Oil Dri or kitty litter) to contain and clean up spilled chemicals, then properly dispose.



#### Employee Education

- Be prepared for emergencies by developing a "spill response plan" for your facility.
- Train employees on the proper procedures to follow in the event of an accidental spill or discharge.
- Display appropriate signage on hazardous material storage containers that list the dangers associated with each substance.
- Train employees about proper disposal of waste.
- Post emergency phone numbers near hazardous material storage areas and on employee bulletin boards.
- Create a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan and make sure employees are familiar with it.



#### Proper Cleaning Techniques

- Never wash spilled chemicals, trash, automobile fluids or grease off of parking lots, loading docks, or into a storm drain.
- Regularly clean outside areas to prevent pollutant buildup.
- Block storm drains before pressure-washing buildings or equipment and collect the water with a liquid vacuum device for proper disposal.
- Verify that floor drains are connected to the sanitary sewer system, not the storm drain system.
- Wash vehicles in a proper facility, such as a car wash, that disposes all water to the sanitary sewer system.



#### Responsible Lawn Maintenance

- Use vegetation that needs less water, fertilizer and pesticides.
- Don't apply lawn chemicals before it rains, and follow label instructions carefully to prevent over-application.
- Use fertilizers, weed killers and de-icing materials only as needed. Sweep up any residue and place in the trash.
- Make sure grass clippings, leaves and other debris are disposed of properly. Debris in drainageways could cause localized flooding.
- Avoid over-watering lawns to prevent excess runoff.
- If using commercial landscapers, be sure that they follow these guidelines as well.

