



What Apartment Managers Need to Know About Sewers and Storm Drains

The most important thing to know about sewers and storm drains is they are two different systems. All outside storm drains flow directly to the nearest creek (or bay or ocean) where pollutants such as paint, oil, soap and chemicals can harm fish and wildlife.

In contrast, all indoor drains (e.g. sinks, showers, toilets) flow directly to the sewage treatment plant or septic tank. Because treatment plants and septic systems are not designed to manage hazardous waste, some toxic compounds pass right through the plant and enter the Bay. In septic systems, the compounds can filter through soils and reach groundwater—before traveling on to the Bay or ocean.

Apartment managers can play a key role in helping to prevent pollution of local waterways by following the suggestions on the Manager Checklist below.

Manager Checklist for Routine Site Inspections

LANDSCAPED AREAS

- Yard clippings and leaves are disposed of in yard waste recycling bins. In creeks, excess organic matter can harm fish by taking up needed oxygen.
- Tenants clean up pet feces and dispose of it in the garbage. Pet waste can contain bacteria and viruses that could spread to wildlife.
- Irrigation system is checked to prevent overwatering. Overwatering is a waste of time, money, and water. It can also carry harmful fertilizers and pesticides into creeks via the storm drain. Call your local water district for information on “smart” irrigation practices.
- Before using pesticides, less-toxic alternatives are explored. Call MCSTOPPP at 499-6528 for information on the least toxic methods available for managing pests or visit www.OurWaterOurWorld.org
- Hire a Bay-Friendly Landscaper. Call MCSTOPPP or visit www.bayfriendly.org

BUILDING MAINTENANCE AREAS

- Construction materials such as concrete, dry wall, sand, dirt, and paint are stored at least 10 feet from the storm drain and covered with a tarp before rain is forecast.
- Storm drains (and trash receptacles) are not used to dispose of any hazardous waste – including chemicals, pesticides, fertilizers, solvents, fuels, motor oil, cleaning agents, etc. For proper disposal, call 485-5648. Novato managers should call 892-6395.
- Surface cleaners (for parking lots, windows, sidewalks, buildings, etc.) have been trained in pollution prevention techniques. For a list of trained surface cleaners, contact MCSTOPPP at 499-6528 or visit our website at www.mcstoppp.org
- For structural pest control, consider Eco-Wise certified professionals or Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Specialists. Visit www.EcoWiseCertified.org or www.birc.org

PARKING AREAS

- Automotive fluids leaked from vehicles are cleaned from pavement. Dripped oil, antifreeze, and other automotive fluids can easily be washed into creeks or the Bay by rain or hosing off surfaces. Use absorbents – like kitty litter – to contain small amounts and toss in the trash. Remember to recycle used motor oil, oil filters, antifreeze and batteries!
- Parking areas are swept rather than hosed down to prevent runoff of harmful chemicals, oils, and grease from entering a storm drain.

All outside storm drains flow directly to the nearest creek (or bay or ocean).

- Encourage tenants to use a commercial car wash. All soaps, even those labeled “biodegradable,” are toxic to fish and wildlife. The best course of action is to prohibit car washing on the premises. For more information, call MCSTOPPP at 499-6528.
- All storm drains on site are stenciled “Drains to Bay” (or a similar slogan). Call the local stormwater coordinator in your city/town for ordering information.
- Report any spill that threatens or enters a gutter, storm drain, creek, Bay or wetland. Call the local stormwater coordinator in your City/Town. After hours, call the County Sheriff’s non-emergency number at 499-7233 or call 911 if the discharge poses an immediate threat.

DUMPSTER AREAS

- Dumpster lids are kept closed at all times to protect garbage from being scattered by the wind and/or animals.
- Dumpsters are kept locked and in a secure area to prevent dumping of undesirable materials by non-tenants. Keep in a covered area to prevent rain from entering.
- Dumpster does not leak. If you detect a leak, call the company who leased it to you and request a replacement.

REPORT DISCHARGES TO STORM DRAINS*

Town of San Anselmo
258-4600 (M-Th)

Town of Corte Madera
927-5057 (M-Th)

City of Belvedere
435-3838 (M-Th)

Town of Ross
453-1453 ext. 163

Town of Fairfax
453-1584 (M-Th)

City of Novato
899-8246

City of Sausalito
289-4100 ext. 106

City of San Rafael
485-3355

County of Marin
499-6528, press 0

Town of Tiburon
435-7399

City of Larkspur
927-5017 (M-Th)

City of Mill Valley
388-4033

**During normal business hours, ask for your local stormwater coordinator at the numbers listed above. After hours, report illegal discharges entering storm drains, creeks, etc. to the County Sheriff’s non-emergency hotline at 499-7233 - or call 911 if the discharge poses an immediate threat.*

You can also file an anonymous on-line report of an Illegal Discharge at www.mcstoppp.org It will be directed to the stormwater coordinator in your City/Town for follow-up.

Stormwater Ordinance (What the Law Says)

In your rental contracts, apartment managers should inform renters that dumping or discharging pollutants into a storm drain is a violation of Marin’s local stormwater ordinance. It is a misdemeanor or infraction to dispose or dump anything on the roadway or into storm drains. Violators are liable for cleanup costs and fines. For more information, contact your local stormwater coordinator.

Marin County Stormwater
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(415) 499-6528
www.mcstoppp.org

