



## NURSERIES

**It is illegal to allow anything other than rain water to be discharged to a storm drain.**

Irrigation water from nurseries, runoff from stockpiles, leaks from vehicles or equipment, and spilled materials should never be allowed to be transported into a street, gutter, parking lot, or storm drain. If discharged or disposed of improperly, many materials found at nurseries such as sediment, herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers can be harmful to water quality and creek habitats.

Individuals and businesses that improperly handle and dispose of non-stormwater materials down the storm drain are both subject to civil and criminal prosecution.

### HOW ARE THE STORM DRAIN AND SANITARY SEWER SYSTEMS DIFFERENT?

Throughout urban communities, the storm drain system transports rainwater to local creeks, rivers, and the ocean. This system was created to prevent flooding within communities and homes.

All water and materials that enter the storm drain system is untreated.

The sanitary sewer is a plumbed system that transports used water from buildings to a wastewater collection and treatment facility, where the water and sewage is treated.

If you see an outdoor drain and are unsure of its use, assume it is a storm drain and do not discharge wash water to it.

Clean creeks are important. They provide vital fish habitat, recreation, and add to the beauty of our city.

### BEST PRACTICES: KEEP YOUR PROPERTY CLEAN

- Clean spills immediately and dispose of material properly. Only rain down the storm drain.
- Use dry cleanup methods (i.e. broom or vacuum). Avoid hosing down or pressure washing work areas.
- Routinely sweep up litter and debris from parking areas and walkways.
- Ensure disposal, recycling, and plant debris areas are away from creek banks, waterways, drainage ditches and storm drains.
- Direct roof runoff so it won't flow across areas where contaminants will be picked up and washed into storm drains.
- If a pressure washer is used, ensure that used water is self-contained in the unit and not allowed to discharge into the street or storm drain.

### OPERATING YOUR BUSINESS

- Reject leaking or damaged bags or containers from suppliers.
- Promote native plants to reduce the need for pesticides and fertilizers. Consider discouraging sale of invasive plants in your store. Go to: <https://www.cal-ipc.org/plants/profiles/>
- Encourage beneficial predators and parasites to keep "pest" populations under control naturally.
- If you receive plant stock or materials produced by other growers, establish procedures to ensure incoming stock is clean of invasive pests or diseases before you add them to your general stock inventory.

- Monitor pest populations. This will lead to early detection of problems before major damage occurs.
- Promote Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices. For example, remove plant pests, such as snails, by hand; dislodge aphids with a sharp spray of water; exclude mammals and birds by using fences, netting, and tree trunk guards; and pull weeds by hand. For more information, go to <https://www.birc.org/> or <https://ipminstitute.org/>
- Maintain equipment you own and rent regularly to prevent leaks.
- Properly dispose of unused pesticides and other hazardous materials/wastes at a Hazardous Waste Collection Facility.
- If you clean equipment, all wash water must go to the sanitary sewer and if motorized, through an oil/water filter.
- Store loose materials inside or under a cover, and properly cover/protect potting soil, manure, and amendments so rain and wind don't carry them to the storm drain.

## FERTILIZER USAGE

- Minimize the use of fertilizers and pesticides. Apply directly on the soil or in the pot.
- Save money with mix/media testing and leaf analyses to assist with better management of nutrients without over-fertilization.
- Use slow release or controlled release fertilizers.

## PESTICIDE USAGE

- Read and follow instructions on use of product carefully. "More" is not "better".
- Do not apply pesticides if heavy fog or rain is forecast.
- Use non-toxic or the least toxic pesticides when possible if a pesticide must be used. For examples, go to <https://ourwaterourworld.org/>
- Do not mix or prepare pesticides near storm drains, wells, creeks or other waterways.

## WATERING PLANTS

- Prevent over watering. Water plants, not the ground.
- Use containers with media/mixes having higher water holding capacity to reduce leaching and prevent runoff.

- Irrigate early in the morning to reduce evaporation during summer months and use a hose equipped with a hose-end shutoff nozzle or valve.
- Check irrigation systems regularly for leaks and overspray.
- Reset irrigation controllers as the seasons change the amount of water needed.

## INFORM YOUR CUSTOMERS

- Label storm drain inlets with "No Dumping, Drains to Creek" decals.
- Anything dumped at your site becomes your responsibility; make sure everything is disposed of properly to avoid violations.

## ARE YOU READY TO RESPOND TO A SPILL?

- Have a written plan.
- Train employees annually on storm water regulations, spill response, personal safety, and hazardous waste handling and disposal.
- Have spill cleanup materials onsite.
- Have Safety Data Sheets for all products used.

**Releasing pollutants into the storm drain system or a waterway is prohibited by local ordinance, state, and federal law.**

**For an emergency or a spill involving hazardous materials or hazardous waste call 911 or your local Fire Department.**

## For All Non-Emergency / Non-Hazardous Spills

- To report a Non-Hazardous spill, or for other useful phone numbers, see Spill Numbers informational reference sheet for your local agency contact information or visit: [www.streetstocreeks.org/spill-numbers/](http://www.streetstocreeks.org/spill-numbers/)