

University of California, Berkeley
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Supersedes: Drain Disposal Policy, October 1, 1990



Water Protection

Current Responsible Executive: Nathan Brostrom
Vice Chancellor, Administration

Original Responsible Executive: Steve Lustig, Acting Vice Chancellor
Business & Administrative Services

Responsible Office: Environment, Health & Safety (EH&S)
642-3073, ehs@berkeley.edu

Contacts: **Spill Reporting:** In case of a spill to a drain, waterway, or conveyance leading to a local waterway (pipe, ditch, curb), contact EH&S (642-3073) or call 911.

Policy Questions: Questions about this policy may be directed to the EH&S Environmental Protection Team at 642-3073.

Facilities Questions: For questions regarding campus utilities, such as whether a sink or floor basin is connected to a sanitary sewer or storm drain, contact Physical Plant-Campus Services (24-hour work order) at 642-1032.

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the University of California, Berkeley to protect and enhance the environmental quality of state and local waterways, such as Strawberry Creek, for the enjoyment and health of the community and future generations. The campus is committed to compliance with applicable environmental laws and regulations and to continually improving operations to prevent pollution of waterways that can harm local ecosystems and public health. This document explains the responsibility of each member of the campus community for helping meet these objectives.

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Who Is Affected by This Policy

- Everyone at UC Berkeley

Who Administers This Policy

- Office of Environment, Health & Safety (EH&S)
- Managers and Supervisors who oversee activities involving hazardous wastes or other potential pollutants or pollutant sources

Why We Have This Policy

Protection of Local Water Bodies

Historical development of the San Francisco Estuary (and other regions of California where UC Berkeley facilities are located) has led to impaired water quality from pollution. Local streams have been at times polluted by sewage, pesticides, soap, and automotive emissions. Populations of aquatic and riparian wildlife such as fish and invertebrates have disappeared or been reduced dramatically.

Historic waste disposal practices, such as dumping laboratory chemicals into sink drains or paint washwater into catch basins, are no longer allowed by federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies. In addition, protection of campus waterways is necessary to promote beneficial uses, which include education, research, wildlife habitat, and aesthetic enjoyment. Recent improvements in waste disposal practices and restoration projects have demonstrated that the trend in water quality degradation can be reversed through improved operational processes and building design, including proper use of sanitary sewers and storm drains.

Materials disposed into campus drains are discharged into water bodies, either directly (via storm drains) or indirectly (via sanitary sewers). While materials disposed into sanitary sewers receive treatment at wastewater treatment plants, materials disposed into storm drains are discharged to water bodies untreated. Thus, disposal of harmful materials into storm drains and sewers can have an adverse effect on public health and the environment.

Most storm drains discharge into local creeks that are sensitive wildlife habitats and important aesthetic landscape features. Ultimately, all materials discharged into drains at central campus locations and nearby properties flow into San Francisco Estuary, which is a vital wildlife habitat and public resource.

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Compliance with Law and Policy

Protection of water quality is mandated by the federal Clean Water Act, the state Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, and other federal, state, and local regulations, as well as by campus policies and plans such as the Landscape Master Plan, Strawberry Creek Management Plan, and the campus Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan specification.

Responsibilities

Office of Environment, Health & Safety (EH&S):

- Develops, coordinates, and oversees campus environmental protection programs and conducts related monitoring, training, and outreach activities.

Managers and Supervisors (including Principal Investigators) who oversee activities involving hazardous materials or other potential pollutants or pollutant sources:

- Evaluate all activities and facilities under their supervision that may present a risk of pollution and ensure appropriate controls are in place. A partial list of such activities and facilities includes: research, teaching, and clinical laboratories; photography laboratories; food service; painting and other construction work; grounds and athletic field maintenance; custodial activities; and surface and vehicle washing.
- Ensure that individuals under their supervision who conduct activities that present a risk of pollution are trained in the campus Drain Disposal Guidelines and any stormwater Best Management Practices applicable to those activities. These individuals must know how to identify and mitigate potential releases to the sanitary sewer or storm drain systems. Such training should be documented, with records retained where they can be recovered. EH&S is available to assist with this training.
- Curtail or stop activities being carried out under their authority if they reasonably believe the activity poses an imminent threat to the environment. Upon directing that work be curtailed or stopped, if the situation cannot be corrected immediately, the Manager or Supervisor must notify 1) the department head under whose responsibility the work is being performed, and 2) EH&S.

Students, Faculty, Staff, Visitors, Outside Contractors, and Guests:

Each member of the campus community is responsible for helping prevent pollution of waterways that can harm local ecosystems and public health. It is the responsibility of all students, faculty, staff, visitors, contractors, and guests to adhere to this and other campus

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policies and programs that protect our living and working environment. For more information on related responsibilities, see the policy entitled “Responsibility for Environment, Health and Safety” at <http://www.ehs.berkeley.edu/Policy/responsib/resdoc95.doc>.

Procedures

- Storm drains may be used for discharging only rainwater and groundwater. Prohibited materials include trash, dirt, and tap water containing chloramines and other disinfectants. Exceptions are permitted only with the express written approval of EH&S.
- Sinks, floor drains, toilets, and other fixtures connected to sanitary sewers may be used only for disposal of materials that do not pose a threat to campus sewer systems and can be fully treated by local wastewater treatment plants.
- Accidental discharges of prohibited materials to drains must be reported immediately to EH&S.
- Improper disposal into storm drains and sanitary sewers is a violation of law, and the responsible party (person or department) may be subject to fines.
- If it is unclear whether a particular drain connects to the storm drain or to the sanitary sewer system, contact Physical Plant-Campus Services before discharging anything into the drain.
- Persons observing potentially harmful discharges into drains should contact EH&S or the University Police immediately.

Sanitary Sewer Prohibited Discharges

For lists of prohibited materials and other specific guidance for use of sanitary sewers on the central campus, please refer to the Drain Disposal Guidelines at <http://www.ehs.berkeley.edu/pubs/guidelines/draindisppls.html>. For field stations and other locations off campus, these Guidelines may apply, but EH&S should be contacted for specific disposal questions.

Storm Drain Prohibited Discharges and Best Management Practices

For lists of prohibited materials and other specific guidance for use of the campus storm drain system, including descriptions of proper procedures used to prevent stormwater pollution from facilities and construction operations, see the Stormwater Management Plan and Best Management Practices at <http://www.cabmphandbooks.com/>.

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Website Address for this Policy

<http://campuspol.chance.berkeley.edu/policies/WaterProtection.pdf>

Glossary

These definitions apply to these terms as they are used in this policy.

Best Management Practices (BMPs): Stormwater Best Management Practices are operational procedures designed to reduce the discharge of pollutants to the maximum extent practicable. BMPs include treatment controls, operating procedures, and practices to control site runoff, spills and leaks, sludge or waste disposal, or drainage from raw material storage. BMPs are to be implemented by campus staff and outside contractors whenever they perform work at UC Berkeley.

Drain Disposal Guidelines: Procedures for use of the campus sanitary sewer for disposal of wastewater from laboratory shops and operations are presented in the “Guidelines for Drain Disposal of Chemicals at University of California, Berkeley, November 2002.”

Pollutant: The federal Clean Water Act term “pollutant” means “dredged spoil, solid waste, incinerator residue, biological materials, radioactive materials, heat, wrecked or discarded equipment, rock, salt, cellar dirt, and industrial, municipal, and agricultural waste discharged into water” [federal Clean Water Act §502(6)]. For UC Berkeley, pollutants include but are not limited to: laboratory and shop chemicals, maintenance and custodial chemicals and rinsewaters (including mop water and brush rinse water), building and street surface wash wastewater, soap, excess irrigation or domestic water discharges, trash, grease, gasoline, animal wastes, and soils.

Pollution: The man-made or man-induced alteration of chemical, physical, biological, and radiological integrity of water [federal Clean Water Act §502(19)]. Pollution includes pollutants as well as other stressors such as habitat destruction and hydrologic modification.

Sanitary Sewer: Sanitary sewers collect wastewater generated inside buildings, such as sink and toilet discharges. The wastewater is then transported through the system to the East Bay Municipal Utilities District wastewater treatment plant in Oakland (or other plants or septic tanks at other locations), where it is treated before being discharged to San Francisco Bay (or other local waterways).

Storm Drain: Pipes, open gutters, or ditches on streets, parking lots, loading docks, roofs, and other surfaces that receive rain water. Berkeley storm drains discharge water—as well as the pollutants and litter it picks up—into Strawberry Creek and San Francisco Bay without any form of treatment. Because this water receives no treatment, it is especially important to keep pollutants out of it.

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Stormwater: Rainwater draining to the storm drain systems. Stormwater can become polluted through contact with pollutants such as oil, litter, heavy metals, pesticides, fertilizers, and sediment.

Related Documents

- Responsibility for Environment, Health and Safety:
<http://www.ehs.berkeley.edu/Policy/responsib/resdoc95.doc>
- Guidelines for Drain Disposal of Chemicals at University of California, Berkeley, November 2002:
<http://www.ehs.berkeley.edu/pubs/guidelines/draindispgls.html>
- Keeping Strawberry Creek Clean Fact Sheet:
<http://www.ehs.berkeley.edu/pubs/factsheets/57keepstrwrkclean.html>
- Stormwater Management Plan: <http://www.cabmphandbooks.com/>
- Procedure for Wastewater Management from UC Berkeley Building Washing and Maintenance Operations:
- Procedure for Preventing Chlorinated Water from Entering the Storm Drain System Using Sodium Sulfite:
- Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan, Construction Specification 02210:
<http://www.ehs.berkeley.edu/envprot/ccg/swpp.pdf>
- United States Clean Water Act:
<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/cor/byagency/epa1251.htm>
- State of California Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act:
<http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=wat&group=12001-13000&file=13000-13002>