

## Description

Spills and leaks of solid and liquid materials processed, handled or stored outdoors can be a significant source of stormwater pollutants. Spilled substances can reach receiving waters when runoff washes these materials from impervious surfaces or when spills directly enter the storm sewer system during dry weather conditions.

Effective spill control includes both spill prevention and spill response measures and depends on proper employee training for spill response measures and may also include structural spill containment, particularly at industrial locations. Structural spill containment measures typically include temporary or permanent curbs or berms that surround a potential spill site. Berms may be constructed of concrete, earthen material, metal, synthetic liners, or other material that will safely contain the spill. Spill control devices may also include valves, slide gates, or other devices that can control and contain spilled material before it reaches the storm sewer system or receiving waters.



**Photograph SPCC-1.** Use of secondary containment around supplies stored outside helps to reduce the likelihood of spill and leaks reaching the storm sewer system in runoff. Photo courtesy of Tom Gore.

## Appropriate Uses

Implement spill prevention, containment and control measures at municipal, commercial and industrial facilities in areas where materials may be spilled in quantities that may adversely impact receiving waters when discharged directly or through the storm sewer system. Check local, state, and/or federal regulations to determine when spill containment and control measures are required by law. Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasures Plans may be required for certain facilities handling oil and hazardous substances under Section 311(j)(1)(C) of the federal Clean Water Act.

## Practice Guidelines

### Spill Prevention Measures

- Train employees on potential sources of pollution on-site and provide clear, common-sense spill prevention practices. Require that these practices be strictly followed.
- Identify equipment that may be exposed to stormwater, pollutants that may be generated and possible sources of leaks or discharges.
- Perform regular inspection and preventative maintenance of equipment to ensure proper operation and to check for leaks or evidence of discharge (stains). Provide clear procedures to ensure that needed repairs are completed and provide temporary leak containment until such repairs can be implemented.

### Also See These BMP Fact Sheets

- Covering Storage/Handling Areas
- Good Housekeeping
- Vehicle Fueling, Maintenance, Washing & Storage
- Preventative Maintenance

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- Drain or replace motor oil and other automotive fluids in a designated area away from storm sewer inlets. Collect spent fluids and recycle or dispose of properly. Never dispose of these fluids in the storm sewer or sanitary sewer.
- In fueling areas, clean up spills with dry methods (absorbents) and use damp cloths on gas pumps and damp mops on paved surfaces. Never use a hose to “wash down” a fuel spill.
- Where practical, reduce stormwater contact with equipment and materials by implementing indoor or covered storage, implementing stormwater run-on control measures and following good housekeeping practices.

## **Identification of Spill Areas**

Identify potential spill areas, potential spill volumes, material types, frequency of material use, and drainage paths from spill areas with relation to storm sewer inlets, adjacent waterbodies, structural BMPs, and containment structures. Use this information to determine the types of spill prevention and control measures needed specific to the site conditions. Examples of potential spill locations include:

- Loading and unloading areas
- Outdoor storage areas
- Outdoor manufacturing or processing activities
- Waste disposal/storage areas
- Areas that generate significant dust or particulates (that may be subsequently deposited on the ground)
- Salt piles
- Areas prone to spills based on past experience at the site
- Locations where other routine maintenance activities occur such as equipment maintenance and cleaning, pesticide/fertilizer application, etc.

Additionally, areas where smaller leaks may occur such as parking should also have basic spill cleanup procedures.

## **Material Handling Procedures**

From a water quality perspective, the primary principle behind effective material handling practices is to minimize exposure to stormwater. This can be accomplished by storing the material indoors under weather-resistant covering, elevating the material off the ground by using pallets, and diverting stormwater around materials storage areas. Representative outdoor materials handling procedures include:

- Keep bulk solid materials such as raw materials, sand, gravel, topsoil, compost, concrete, packing materials, metal products and other materials covered and protected from stormwater.
- When practical, store materials on impermeable surfaces.
- Store hazardous materials according to federal, state, and local hazardous materials requirements.

- Adopt procedures that reduce the chance of spills or leaks during filling or transfer of materials.
- Substitute less toxic or non-toxic materials for toxic materials.
- Store containers that are easily punctured or damaged away from high traffic areas (i.e., adopt a materials flow/plant layout plan).
- Add waste-capture containers such as collection pans for lubricating fluids.
- Store drums and containers with liquid materials on impermeable surfaces and provide secondary containment where appropriate. Drums stored outdoors should be located on pallets to minimize contact with runoff.

## Spill Response Procedures and Equipment

Spill response procedures should be tailored to site-specific conditions and industry-specific regulatory requirements. General spill response procedures include:

- Containment and cleanup of spills should begin promptly after the spill is observed.
- Sweep up small quantities of dry chemical or solids to reduce exposure to runoff. Shoveling may be used for larger quantities of materials.
- Absorbents should be readily accessible in fueling areas or other areas susceptible to spills.
- Wipe up small spills with a shop rag, store shop rags in appropriate containers, dispose of rags properly or use a professional industrial cleaning service.
- Contain medium-sized spills with absorbents (e.g., kitty litter, sawdust) and use inflatable berms or absorbent “snakes” as temporary booms for the spill. Store and dispose of absorbents properly. Wet/dry vacuums may also be used, but not for volatile fluids.
- Develop procedures and locations for containing and storing leaking containers.
- Install drip pans below minor equipment leaks and properly dispose of collected material until a repair can be made.
- For large spills, first contain the spill and plug storm drain inlets where the liquid may migrate off-site, then clean up the spill.
- Excavation of spill areas to removed contaminated material may be required where large liquid spills occur on unpaved surfaces.
- An inventory of cleanup materials should be maintained onsite and strategically located based on the types and quantities of chemicals present.

## Structural Spill Containment Measures

Two general approaches are often used when implementing spill containment measures. The first approach is designed to contain the entire spill. The second approach uses curbing to route spilled material to a collection basin. Both containment berming and curbing should be sized to safely contain or convey to a collection basin a spill from the largest storage tank, rail car, tank truck, or other containment device in the possible spill area. The spill containment area must have an impermeable surface (e.g.,

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impermeable liner, asphalt or concrete) to prevent groundwater contamination. The containment system must be designed to enable collection and removal of spilled material through a pump or vacuum trucks, use of sorbent or gelling material, or other measures. Material removed from the spill area must be disposed of or recycled according to local, state, and federal standards.

If the capacity of the containment berming or the collection basin is exceeded, supplemental spill control measures should be available such as a portable containment device, sorbent materials, or gelling agents that eventually solidify the material. Water that collects within containment areas due to rainfall or snowmelt must be appropriately treated before release from the spill area.

### Spill Plan Development

Many industries are required by federal law to have a Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasures Plan (SPCC) that meets specific regulatory criteria when certain types and quantities of materials are used or processed at a site. These plans can be instrumental in developing a spill control plan for stormwater management purposes. Even if an SPCC plan is not legally required at a site, a spill control plan for stormwater management purposes may be necessary. Representative information appropriate for a spill control plan, building on concepts previously introduced in this Fact Sheet, includes:

- Site plan showing where materials are stored and handled, and where associated activities occur.
- Notification procedures to be used in the event of an accident
- Instructions for clean-up procedures.
- A designated person with spill response and clean-up authority.
- Training of key personnel in plan and clean-up procedures.
- Signs posted at critical locations providing a summary of SPCC plan information, phone numbers, contacts, equipment locations, etc.
- Provisions requiring spills to be cleaned up, corrective actions taken, or countermeasures implemented immediately.
- Provisions for absorbents to be made available for use in fuel areas, and for containers to be available for used absorbents.
- Prohibition on washing absorbents into the storm drainage system or into the sanitary sewer system via floor drains.
- Provision for emergency spill containment and clean-up kits in accessible and convenient locations. Kits should contain the appropriate clean-up materials applicable to the materials stored at the site.

#### Key Spill Notification Contacts in Colorado

- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Toll-Free 24-hour Environmental Emergency Spill Reporting Line: 1-877-518-5608
- National Response Center: 1-800-424-8802 (24-hour)
- Local Emergency Planning Committee (OEM): 303-273-162
- Division of Oil & Public Safety-Storage Tanks: 303-318-8547
- Oil and Gas Conservation Commission: 303-894-2100 or 1-888-235-1101 (toll-free spill/complaint line)