

CONSTRUCTION SITE STORM WATER POLLUTION PREVENTION

In January 1995, several new ordinance provisions became effective that are designed to help reduce discharges of contaminated water from construction sites. The changes clarified and strengthened previous ordinance provisions, making both actual and threatened discharges to the storm drain system violations of Palo Alto law. The combination of the existing and new ordinance provisions make it clear that discharges to the storm drain from the following types of construction operations are not allowed:

- vehicle and equipment cleaning,
- concrete and mortar work,
- saw cutting of pavement,
- sediment and erosion discharges, and
- clean-up from painting.

This Fact Sheet explains how these provisions are being implemented through inspections, enforcement actions, and contract requirements.

Palo Alto staff conduct three types of inspections at construction sites: large site inspections, routine inspections, and complaint follow-up. For construction sites greater than one acre (large sites), a minimum of three inspections are conducted. For smaller sites, unannounced (or routine) inspections are conducted on a time-available basis. Complaint follow-up inspections are conducted immediately following receipt of a complaint concerning a discharge from a construction site.

Ordinance provisions may be enforced through a new administrative penalty program that allows violators to be fined up to \$5,000 per day of violation. The new administrative penalty provision is being used to penalize egregious or repeat violations. First time violators are, in most cases, being notified that subsequent violations are likely to result in fines. Lists of first time violators are shared with other local jurisdictions so that repeat violators can be identified even if different jurisdictions are involved.

Contractors working on City projects must meet the same requirements as all other contractors. Storm water issues are often discussed during pre-construction meeting and subsequent weekly meetings for City projects. New, detailed specifications for storm drain pollution prevention are included in City contracts. This contract language, or similar language, is also recommended for inclusion in non-City contracts.

Copies of the contract language and the City Ordinance are available from the Regional Water Quality Control Plant at (650) 329-2598. Brochures containing Best Management Practices for various types of construction activities are also available. These brochures are given to all site managers when building permits are obtained and are made available during site inspections.