

## Drains | *What you need to know*



### Getting Help

For more information about drains, contact:

- **General Help:**  
Haz Waste Help Line, **206-296-4692**.
- **Sanitary Sewer Information:**  
King County Industrial Waste,  
**206-477-5300**, or **info.kciw@kingcounty.gov**.  
You can also contact your local sanitary  
sewer agency.
- **Storm Drainage Information:**  
Call the city your business is in and  
ask for the stormwater department.  
If you're in unincorporated King County,  
call **206-477-4811**.
- **Septic System Information:**  
Public Health – Seattle & King County,  
**206-477-8050**.

*There are limits to what can go down the drain. Putting the wrong materials down drains is against the law, and it harms the environment and human health. It can also flood your property and lead to costly repairs.*

*You are responsible for maintaining drains and underground pipes on your property. If you lease your property, ask your landlord who performs drain and pipe maintenance. If drains and pipes are not maintained, they may not work correctly.*

### IDENTIFY WHERE YOUR DRAINS GO

Locate all drains on your property, inside and outside your building. Check for floor drains, which may be in the basement, sink drains, parking lot drains, and industrial drains.

**Most outdoor drains**, such as those in your parking lot, lead to the stormwater system. Assume any outdoor drain is a storm drain unless you can verify that it leads to the sanitary sewer.

**Most indoor drains** connect to the sanitary sewer or a septic system. Do you know if your building is connected to the sanitary sewer system? If you don't know, check your utility bill, or ask your landlord.

**If you're not sure where your drains go**, check your building's "as-built" plans. If you lease your property, ask your property manager. Call your sanitary sewer or stormwater utility for help if you own your property. If you don't know your sanitary sewer or stormwater utility, contact the city your business is in for more information.



## KNOW WHAT CAN GO DOWN YOUR DRAINS

*There are limits on what can go down drains.  
The restrictions vary based on where the drain goes.*



**The stormwater system** carries rainwater and snowmelt only. Stormwater pipes flow to streams, rivers, groundwater, and Puget Sound without treatment. Allowing anything other than rainwater or snowmelt to enter a storm drain is illegal and can result in fines and expensive cleanup costs. You should assume all outdoor drains flow to the stormwater system and only allow rain to enter them. For questions about the stormwater system call the city your business is in and ask for the stormwater department. If you're in unincorporated King County call **206-477-4811**.

**The sanitary sewer system** carries wastewater to a sewage treatment plant. Certain wastes are not allowed in the sanitary sewer system. If you are allowing anything other than kitchen, bathroom, or laundry room wastewater to enter the sanitary sewer, you may need a permit or discharge authorization and pretreatment equipment. Check with the King County Industrial Waste Program at **206-477-5300**, or your sanitary sewer agency before allowing anything that's not permitted to enter a sanitary sewer drain.



**Septic systems** provide sewage treatment on your property. Do not put industrial wastewater or hazardous chemicals down a drain leading to a septic system. Doing so may harm the system's operation and pollute the groundwater. Only kitchen, bathroom, or laundry room wastewater may enter a septic system. For information about septic systems and their maintenance, call Public Health – Seattle & King County at **206-477-8050**.

**Sumps** collect and hold water, chemicals, and other liquids. If you have a sump, check whether it has an outlet and where the outlet goes. If the sump leads to the sanitary sewer, stormwater, or a septic system, then you should follow the restrictions for that system.

For general questions, call  
the Hazardous Waste Line  
at **206-469-4692**



**Oil/water separators** are designed to remove oil and sediment from water before the water enters the stormwater or sanitary sewer system. Oil/water separators are usually underground. They need regular maintenance.