# A-46: Color Events

Stormwater runoff (rainwater and snow melt) is the largest source of pollution to our lakes, streams and Puget Sound. King County requires businesses to implement measures to protect our shared waters. If the requirements below do not prevent pollution, additional measures are necessary.

The following best management practices (BMPs) apply to color events which include charity, religious, or commercial events that involve the use of powdered and/or liquid dyes. Because they typically occur outside, there is a high likelihood of the color material entering stormwater drainage systems and surface water unless measures are taken to prevent these illicit discharges from occurring.

## Pre-event BMPs

- Call King County Stormwater Services at 206-477-4811 and ask to speak to a source control inspector for specific approval requirements and to arrange a pre-event site visit and/or consultation. Every event will have site specific stormwater considerations.
- Create a map of your event that includes the following: event route; nearby streams, lakes and ponds; start and finish areas; color application stations/areas; and the catch basin inlets and open stormwater features (e.g. ditches, swales, bioretention, rain gardens) at the color application, start and finish areas.
- Create a Pollution Prevention Plan that details the measures taken to ensure that NO dye material, either during or after the event, will enter the stormwater drainage system and how all dye material will be removed and disposed of. The plan must address what will happen in the event of rain. Include emergency phone numbers for King County Stormwater Services, 206-477-4811, in case dye material enters the stormwater drainage system or surface waters.
- Contract with a commercial street cleaning company to clean paved surfaces. Have a storm drain cleaning contractor on-call for discharges to stormwater drainage systems or emergency clean-up if necessary. Ensure the commercial street cleaning firm has a plan in place for the proper disposal of sweepings from the event and associated air filters.
- All clean-up must be completed prior to the next forecasted rainfall, no later than 24-hours after the event.
- Request a copy of the dye product's safety data sheet (SDS) from the manufacturer or supplier. Review SDS for potential safety and environmental hazards.
- Provide copies of the map, pollution prevention plan, commercial cleaning contract, dye material SDSs, and the names and contact information of the event officials to the local stormwater agency. This information shall be submitted at least 3 weeks prior to the event.
- Preventing runoff from entering storm drain systems and water bodies:

- Protect storm drains by using berms and covering the drains with tarps or catch basin covers.
- Prohibit participants from throwing dye within 100 feet of any stream, ditch, or water body.
- Set up color stations at least 100 feet away from any stream, ditch, or water body.
- The route, start, finish, and color application stations must be at least 100' away from any permeable pavement or the permeable pavement must be completely covered.
- If the event will be held on a small, contained area, cordon off the area and place enough covers on the ground to cover the entire site. If possible, contain the color application to grassy areas where ground covers are unnecessary.

## Event clean-up BMPs

- Dry off tarps and stained wet pavement with towels or absorbent pads.
- Use brooms or street sweepers to clean up paved areas. The fineness of the material may require sweepers with dust control systems.
- Use care when removing berms, covers and tarps to ensure no dye enters the storm drains.
- Do not use blowers to move dye material.
- Do not use hoses or pressure washers to rinse excess dye off of tarps, sidewalks, or paved areas.
- If it becomes necessary to use water to clean surfaces, all the water must be collected and disposed of to the sanitary sewer system, with approval from the local sewer agency.
- Call King County Stormwater Services immediately (24/7) if any colored water enters a stormwater drainage system or water body.
- All litter and debris must be picked up and properly disposed of.
- "Biodegradable" and "non-toxic" do NOT mean that a substance can go into stormwater drainage systems or water bodies. The dye material can harm aquatic organisms by altering water quality and chemistry. State and federal environmental laws require local jurisdictions to prohibit non-stormwater discharges to storm drains. Dye material and any wash water are prohibited non-stormwater discharges.

## Additional Information

- Potential pollutants can include: nutrients, oxygen demanding substances, sediment, and other pollutants.
- *Stormwater Pollution Prevention Manual*, Chapter 5: Information Sheets
    - Catch Basin Insert
    - Containment
    - Controlling and Collecting Contaminated Runoff

- Drainage Maintenance Contractors
- Spill Response and Cleanup Plan

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*For more information or assistance contact the King County Stormwater Services at 206–477–4811 and visit kingcounty.gov/stormwater.*