R-6: Residential Home Maintenance and Repair

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

There are a variety of home maintenance and repair activities that have the potential to adversely affect our streams, rivers, and lakes. Pollutants generated from these activities can affect whether a water body is swimmable or fishable.

Required BMPs

- Do not dispose of wastewater into the street, gutter, storm drain, drainage ditch, or surface water (e.g., stream, creek, or any other body of water).

Painting

- Do not dispose of wash water from cleaning brushes, paint rollers, paint buckets, or containers to surface water, storm drains, or ditches.
- Wash water from latex paints can be disposed of to the sanitary sewer (down a sink or toilet).
- Empty containers of latex paint can be left open to dry out any residual paint, and then, once a solid, can be disposed of in your normal garbage or taken to a transfer station for disposal.
- Residual oil-based paint, paint thinners, and solvents must be disposed of as hazardous waste.

Washing

- Water from washing decks, driveways, roofs, or other hard surfaces may contain suspended solids and other pollutants that should not be directly discharged to stormwater drainage systems.
- Redirect wash water to vegetated areas or areas such as gravel, lawns, landscaping, or bare soil where the water will infiltrate slowly into the ground. If this cannot be accomplished, then filter the wash water through filter fabric, or other filtering media to collect the suspended solids before discharging the water to a stormwater drainage system.
- If any chemicals, soaps or detergents are used the wash water must be collected and disposed of in a sanitary sewer system (i.e., a sink or toilet) or infiltrated on-site. Do not dispose of this wash water to the stormwater drainage system or surface waters.
- If moss control or another chemical treatment is used during the washing of roofs, then disconnect the downspouts so the chemicals do not discharge to the stormwater drainage system. Disperse this wash water onto adjacent lawns and landscaping to infiltrate.

Carpet Cleaning

- Most commercial carpet cleaners have onboard wastewater recycling systems. If you do your own carpet cleaning, then the wash water must be discharged to the sanitary sewer or your septic system.
- Filter the water if it contains lint or other particles to avoid clogging the drains.
- If you prefer not to discharge the water to your septic system, you may also discharge the water to your lawn or a landscaped area to allow the wash water to infiltrate slowly into the ground.
- Be aware that detergents and other cleaning chemicals such as solvents can be harmful to vegetation and septic systems.
- Discharging wash water to the ground may not be allowed if you live in a critical aquifer recharge area. For additional information on critical aquifer recharge areas in King County, refer to King County Code 21A.24.311-316.
- Never dispose of carpet cleaning wash water to a storm drain, drainage ditch, or surface water. Carpet cleaning wastewater contains chemicals, detergents, and suspended solids that adversely impact the quality of surface and ground waters.

Cement/Concrete Work

- Concrete/cement wash water has a pH level that is toxic to aquatic life.
- Do not allow wash water from concrete work to discharge into stormwater drainage systems, including small yard drains or adjacent roadways.
- This is especially important when installing washed aggregate driveways or patios. Direct the wash water to vegetated areas or dig a hole where the wash water can settle and infiltrate slowly into the ground. The cement residue can be mixed into the soil where the wash water is infiltrated with no detrimental effects, and the pH will be neutralized.

Tips

- Hire a professional home maintenance and repair company that follows the approved BMPs for home repair and maintenance. If you have questions about which BMPs a business must comply with contact King County Stormwater Services at 206-477-4811 or visit www.kingcounty.gov/stormwater.
- Remember, as a homeowner, you have a responsibility to ensure your contractors follow these required BMPs and all King County codes and regulations.

Additional Information

- Potential pollutants can include: hydrocarbons—such as gasoline and diesel, metals, nutrients, pH, sediment, and other pollutants.

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