R-9: Residential Dock Washing

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.

Improper washing of docks and floats can result in the discharge of dirt, bird feces, soaps and detergents that can be toxic to aquatic life.

Required BMPs – Surface Preparation and Spot Cleaning

- Use dry methods and equipment (scraping, sweeping, vacuuming) to remove debris, bird feces and other contaminants prior to cleaning with water to prevent these pollutants from entering surface water. This will minimize the need for chemical cleaners. Dispose of debris from the dock as solid waste.
- During cleaning activities, if debris, substances, or wash water have the potential to enter surface waters through drains, temporarily block the drains prior to cleaning activities.
- Hose down the area if necessary and to the extent practicable, collect wash water and dispose of it properly.
    - If the dock is paved and the landward area is vegetated, then the wash water does not have to be collected if the water can soak into the ground without discharging to surface waters or the storm drainage system. However, the wash water does have to be filtered to trap solid materials before entering vegetated areas.
    - If the dock and the landward area are both paved, then use a sump pump, wet vacuum or similar device that enables collection of wash water and associated solids so they can be disposed of in a sink or toilet for treatment at your local sewage treatment plant. On-site septic systems should not receive wash water containing harsh chemicals. The wash water must not go to surface waters or storm drainage system.
- Try spot cleaning with water and a coarse cloth before using soaps or detergents or washing down an area.
    - If a cleaner is needed for spot cleaning:
    - Mix it in a bucket and use it to scrub down only the areas that need extra attention.
    - Try starting with vinegar and baking soda and move to other options as needed. Spot clean using a rag if harsher cleaning products are needed.
    - Use a mild detergent or soap that is pH neutral. Avoid or minimize the use of petroleum distillates, chlorinated solvents, and ammoniated cleaning agents.
    - Use degreasers or absorbent material to remove residual grease by hand and do not allow this material to enter surface waters.

  - Keep cleaners in sealed containers and keep cleaner containers closed securely when transporting between the shore and docks.
  - Properly dispose of wash water.
- Minimize the scour impact of wash water to any exposed soil at the landward end(s) of the dock or below the dock. Place a tarp over exposed soil, plant vegetation, or put berms to contain eroded soil.

Required BMPs – Goose Waste

- If possible, pick up goose waste using shovels, brooms, rakes, power sweepers, and trash cans. Properly dispose of goose waste in the garbage.
- Do not blow, sweep, or wash goose waste into surface waters or storm drainage systems.
- Regularly clean goose waste from areas of chronic deposition.

Required BMPs – Dock Washing and Disposal

- During cleaning activities, if debris, substances, or wash water could enter surface waters through drains, then temporarily block the drains and collect all of the wash water.
- To the extent practicable, collect any wash water generated from hosing down or cleaning dock areas, and dispose of it properly.
  - If the dock is paved and the landward area is vegetated, then the wash water does not have to be collected if the water can soak into the ground without discharging to surface waters or the storm drainage system. However, the wash water does have to be filtered to trap solid materials before entering vegetated areas.
  - If the dock and the landward area are both paved, then use a sump pump, wet vacuum or similar device that enables collection of wash water and associated solids so they can be disposed of in a sink or toilet for treatment at your local sewage treatment plant. On-site septic systems should not receive wash water containing harsh chemicals. The wash water must not go to surface waters or storm drainage system.
- If pressure washing using light pressure. Avoid using excessive pressure, which may damage the dock or send flakes of paint and other material into the water. If the surface is painted with lead or other heavy metal-bearing paint (such as chromium or cadmium), hire a commercial pressure washing service that will collect, test, and properly dispose of the wash water.
- Do not place any debris or substances resulting from cleaning activities in shoreline areas, riparian areas, or on adjacent land where these substances may erode into surface waters.
- Where treated wood associated with the structure being washed are present, use non-abrasive methods and tools that, to the maximum extent practicable, minimize removal of the creosote or treated wood fibers when it removes marine growth from creosote or any other treated wood.

- Do not discharge removed marine growth to surface waters.
- Do not discharge emulsifiers, dispersants, solvents, or other toxic deleterious materials to surface waters or storm drainage systems.

Supplemental BMPs- Goose Waste

- Do not feed wild geese.
- Change areas of chronic accumulation of goose waste from goose friendly to goose resistant. Reduce lawn areas and increase the height of shoreline vegetation (tall grass, shrubs) as geese are reluctant to walk through tall vegetation.
- Geese's favorite food is new shoots of grass. Let grass grow to six inches or taller. Stop fertilizing and watering lawn in areas of geese accumulation to reduce the palatability of the lawn.
- Create a natural geese barrier of 20 to 100 feet of herbaceous vegetation at least 3 feet in height to discourage geese. A narrow, winding path through the plantings will allow for beach access, while preventing geese from having a direct line of sight through the planted area. Minimize open sight lines for geese to less than 30 feet.
- Where space is limited, use one or two rows of shrub plantings combined with a fence to construct a geese barrier. Fences should be at least 24 inches tall (3 feet may be better), firmly constructed, and installed to prevent the geese from walking around the ends. Lower openings should be no larger than 4 inches from the ground to prevent goslings from walking under or through the fence.
- Construct bank slopes steeper than 4:1 to discourage geese by preventing a clear view of the bank top and potential predators. Or, separate the beach from the grass with a few steep steps, which makes the ascent too difficult for most geese.
- Plant shrubs or trees near the water's edge to limit takeoff and landing opportunities.
- Scare geese away when they are around. Geese often learn quickly to ignore scare devices that are not a real physical danger. Vary the use, timing, and location of tactics. Examples of harassment and scare tactics include dogs, eyespot balloons, flags and streamers, and scarecrows.
- Canada geese are protected under federal and state law and a hunting license and open season are required to hunt them. Where lethal control is necessary outside of hunting seasons, it should be carried out only under permits issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- The Humane Society of the United States' *Solving Problems with Canada Geese: A Management Plan and Information Guide* http://www.humanesociety.org/assets/pdfs/wild_neighbors/canada_goose_guide.pdf

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