

## PROPER DISPOSAL OF WASTEWATER

# Tips for Carpet Cleaners

The Clean Water Program's friendly and knowledgeable staff support companies like yours in preventing water pollution. The fact that you are reading this fact sheet probably means you have already decided to take steps to do the right thing with the wastewater from your business. Thank you for helping to keep our water safe and healthy.

### Step 1: Filter

First, you should filter the wash water before discharging to the sewer. Fibers and other debris in the water can cause sewer blockages and overflows. The filtered material can go in the garbage, provided the carpet was not contaminated with hazardous materials. See page two for information on how to properly dispose of hazardous materials.

### Step 2: Discharge properly

Next, it's important that wash water and rinse water from carpet cleaning be discharged into a *cleanout*, sink, toilet or other drain connected to the *sanitary sewer system*, and never into a street, gutter, parking lot or *storm drain*.

Allowing any material (liquid or solid) to be dumped into the storm drain, hosed off the pavement into a storm drain or placed where it can be carried to the storm drain by rainwater is an illegal discharge, and the individual could face civil and criminal prosecution for each violation.

### KEY DEFINITIONS

The *Storm Drain System* was built to collect and transport rain to prevent flooding in urban areas. Anything that flows or is discharged into the storm drain system goes directly into local creeks or San Francisco Bay without any treatment.



Protecting Alameda County  
Creeks, Wetlands & the Bay

[cleanwaterprogram.org](http://cleanwaterprogram.org)



**Keep carpet cleaning wash water OUT of storm drains.**



Pouring cleaning fluids or soapy wash water from carpet cleaning activities into the gutters or storm drains will damage sensitive habitats and kill wildlife. Water flowing into storm drains travels directly to local creeks and then to San Francisco Bay. It does not go to a water treatment plant first.

Learn more about preventing water pollution and the Clean Water Program at [www.cleanwaterprogram.org](http://www.cleanwaterprogram.org).



## Proper Procedures for Disposal

- Arrange with your customer to discharge into a toilet or utility sink on their premises, after receiving approval from the local wastewater treatment authority. OR
- Empty your spent cleaning fluid into a utility sink or other indoor sewer connection at your home base after receiving approval from your local wastewater treatment authority.

## What about biodegradable and non-toxic cleaning products?

These guidelines apply even to cleaning products labeled “non-toxic” and “biodegradable.”

- “Non-toxic” means the product is not toxic to the human user.
- “Biodegradable” means the product will eventually break down. Biodegradable products can still harm aquatic wildlife since they need time to break down before they are safe. When biodegradable products enter a creek, they are generally still toxic and can harm wildlife and plants.

## What if you’ve cleaned carpets contaminated with hazardous materials?

Hazardous materials, such as mercury and some solvents and spot removers, cannot be discharged to the sanitary sewer or disposed of as garbage. All hazardous waste must be properly managed and disposed.

## For Help with Hazardous Waste Disposal

Alameda County Household & Small Business Hazardous Waste Program, [www.acgov.org/aceh/household](http://www.acgov.org/aceh/household)

California Department of Toxic Substances Control,  
[www.dtsc.ca.gov/HazardousWaste](http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/HazardousWaste)

### KEY DEFINITIONS

The **Storm Drain System** was built to collect and transport rain to prevent flooding in urban areas. Anything that flows or is discharged into the storm drain system goes directly into local creeks or San Francisco Bay without any treatment.

The **Sanitary Sewer System** collects and transports sanitary wastes from interior building plumbing systems to the wastewater treatment plant where the wastewater is treated.



#### CLEAN WATER PROGRAM

Simple changes to your operations and maintenance can help you comply with local regulations. The Clean Water Program makes it easy.

[cleanwaterprogram.org](http://cleanwaterprogram.org)

## For More Help

For advice and approval on wastewater disposal to the sanitary sewer system, contact:

### Cities of Alameda, Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland or Piedmont

East Bay Municipal  
Utility District (EBMUD)..... (510) 287-1651

### Castro Valley

Castro Valley Sanitary District .. (510) 537-0757

### Cities of Dublin or Pleasanton

Dublin-San Ramon  
Services District..... (925) 828-0515

### Cities of Fremont, Newark or Union City

Union Sanitary District..... (510) 477-7500

### City of Hayward

City of Hayward ..... (510) 881-7900

### City of Livermore

City of Livermore ..... (925) 960-8100

### Cities of San Lorenzo, unincorporated portions of San Leandro and Hayward

Oro Loma Sanitary District ..... (510) 481-6971

### City of San Leandro

City of San Leandro..... (510) 577-3401

## Local Stormwater Agencies

For advice on avoiding disposal to the storm drain system, contact:

Alameda.....	(510) 747-7930
Albany .....	(510) 528-5770
Berkeley.....	(510) 981-6400
Dublin .....	(925) 833-6630
Emeryville .....	(510) 596-3728
Fremont.....	(510) 494-4570
Hayward .....	(510) 881-7900
Livermore .....	(925) 960-8100
Newark .....	(510) 578-4286
Oakland .....	(510) 238-6600
Piedmont.....	(510) 420-3050
Pleasanton .....	(925) 931-5500
San Leandro .....	(510) 577-3401
Unincorporated Alameda County.....	(510) 670-5868
Union City.....	(510) 675-5308

## Local Hazardous Waste Agencies

Alameda County Environmental Health .....	(510) 567-6780 (Serves Alameda, Albany, Castro Valley, Dublin, Emeryville, Newark, Piedmont, San Lorenzo, and Sunol.)
Berkeley Toxics.....	(510) 981-7460
Fremont Fire.....	(510) 494-4213
Hayward Fire .....	(510) 583-4910
Livermore-Pleasanton Fire .....	(925) 454-2362
Oakland Fire .....	(510) 238-3927
San Leandro .....	(510) 577-3401
Union City.....	(510) 675-5358