Land & Drainage Alteration Program ~Fact Sheet 2.5~

Managing Concrete & Mortar

Why is concrete a problem?

Concrete work creates wastes that can harm people, waterways, plants, fish and other wildlife if handled or discarded improperly. When these wastes solidify or build up in stormwater pipes, they may block the drainage flow and cause localized flooding which results in property damage and unsafe driving conditions.

When fresh concrete and cement-related mortars enter the stormwater collection system, they are carried untreated directly into local streams and rivers where they may harm aquatic animals, fish, and plants while also potentially having a negative impact on downstream drinking water sources.

This brochure is designed to clarify concrete waste disposal requirements. The result will be happier customers who appreciate your concern for their property and a cleaner, safer environment.

Why is it important?

Aside from causing environmental damage, improper disposal of concrete, cement-related mortars and concrete/cement wastes violates state and local laws and could lead to costly fines and penalties. It is against federal, state and local law to discharge non-stormwater substances, including biodegradable substances, into the stormwater collection system, which includes street gutters, storm drains and open channels.

What can you do?

Plan ahead

- Plan to complete concrete, asphalt, and seal coat activities during dry weather, if possible. This will allow adequate time for them to set and cure before exposure to rain has the opportunity to carry them into local stormwater systems.
- Always store dry and wet materials in areas that remain protected from wind, rainfall, and runoff.
- Securely close bags of cement after they are open. Keep wind-blown cement powder away from gutters, storm drains, rainfall, and runoff.
- Identify the location of designated concrete wash/disposal areas on each jobsite.
- Install check dams or alternative collection methods down slope from areas of concrete work in order to capture contaminated runoff prior to entering storm drains or waterways.
- If you are mixing your own materials, prepare only the amount of concrete or cement required for a given activity. If you are using a concrete delivery service, encourage them to practice methods to protect water quality as described in this brochure.

Prepare the site

- Protect catch basins and manholes when applying seal coat, slurry seal, fog seal, etc., or when performing saw cut operations.
- Properly dispose of all spilled material and be prepared to contain all washwater on soil, preferably in a bowl-shaped area, to prevent it from leaving the washout area.
- Set up and operate small mixers on tarps or heavy plastic drop cloths to collect spills. Discard the spilled material in the trash.
- Designate an appropriate washout area on each jobsite and brief all concrete workers on its location and use.

During Construction

- Shovel or vacuum saw-cut slurry and remove from the site, always preventing its discharge into stormwater drains or waterways.

- Wash down exposed aggregate concrete only in a manner that allows for proper collection and disposal of waste products.

- Never wash sweepings from exposed aggregate concrete into a street or storm drain. Collect and return to aggregate base stockpile or dispose of properly.

- When breaking asphalt or concrete, control excess dust using a small amount of water and control runoff. Remove all chunks and pieces from the site and recycle or dispose of properly. For a fee, Lane County's Glenwood Central Receiving Station will recycle small quantities of concrete. Please inquire with Lane County for current rates, quantities, and specific requirements for concrete disposal.

Clean Up

- Place all excess concrete in a form, box, or designated washout area where it may be removed after it has hardened. Clean all finishing tools in a designated washout or other properly contained areas.

- Use the minimum amount of water to wash the chute, finishing tools and any other equipment.

- Wash out concrete mixers, pumping equipment and concrete finishing tools only in designated washout areas or other containment areas. Whenever possible, recycle washout by pumping it back into mixers for reuse. Never dispose of washout into the street, storm drains, drainage ditches, or streams.

- After driveway or sidewalk construction, wash fine particles onto soil or landscaped areas and avoid washing to paved areas that lead to streets and storm drains.

- Dispose of small amounts of excess dry concrete, grout, and mortar in garbage receptacles.

- Never bury waste material where it may leach into groundwater and contaminate drinking water sources.

For More Information

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