

A Clean Environment Is Important to All of Us!

Did you know that storm drains are NOT connected to the sanitary sewer system and treatment plant? The primary purpose of storm drains is to carry rainwater away from developed areas to prevent flooding. Untreated storm water and the pollutants it carries flow directly into local waterways and into the ocean.

Automotive maintenance facilities are considered to be sources where significant loads of trace metals, hydrocarbons, and other pollutants can be produced that can affect the quality of stormwater runoff. Some types of waste generated at automobile maintenance facilities and by residents performing their own car maintenance at home include solvents, antifreeze, brake fluid, batteries, motor oils, fuels and grease.

It has been estimated that each year over 180 million gallons of used oil is disposed of improperly and that a single quart of motor oil can pollute 250,000 gallons of drinking water.

Fluid spills and improper disposal of materials result in pollutants, heavy metals and toxic materials entering ground and surface water supplies creating public health and environmental risks. But each of us can do small things to help clean up our water too – and that adds up to a pollution solution!



Town of Vernon

Stormwater Management Program

Best Management Practices for Automotive Businesses



Best Management Practices

The automotive repair industry is one of the leaders in number of generators and amount of total waste produced for small quantity generators of hazardous waste in the United States. Common activities that generate this waste include cleaning parts, changing vehicle fluids and replacing or repairing equipment. Below are recommended Best Management Practices (BMP's) for automotive businesses.

- *Changing Automotive Fluids*
Designate an area away from storm or sanitary drains to change fluids. Keep a drip pan under vehicles to catch fluids whenever you unclip hoses, unscrew filters or change parts to contain unexpected leaks. Collect, separate, and recycle motor oil, antifreeze, transmission fluid, and gear oil. Drain brake fluid and other non-recyclables into a proper container and handle as a hazardous waste. Use a radiator flushing fluid that can be recycled, and add it to the waste antifreeze.
- *Preventing Leaks and Spills*
Avoid spills by emptying and wiping drip pans when you move them to another vehicle or when they are half-full. Drain all fluids from wrecked vehicles or "parts" cars you keep on site. Routinely check equipment to wipe up spills and repair leaks. Place large pans or an inflatable berm under wrecked cars.
- *Cleaning Up Spills*
Clean up small spills at once using shop rags. Keep dry absorbent material and/or a wet/dry vacuum cleaner for mid-sized spills. Contain large spills immediately; block or shut off floor and parking lot drains and notify the authorities. Train employees to be familiar with hazardous spill response plans and emergency procedures.
- *Fueling Vehicles*
Clean up minor spills with a dry absorbent, rather than allowing them to evaporate. Dispose of the absorbent as a dry hazardous waste. Use a damp cloth and a damp mop to keep the area clean rather than a hose or a wet mop.
- *Cleaning Parts*
Clean parts in a self-contained unit, solvent sink, or parts washer to prevent solvents and grease from entering a sewer or storm drain connection.
- *Metal Grinding & Finishing*
Catch metal filings in an enclosed unit or on a tarp. Sweep filing area to prevent washing metals into floor drains.
- *Storing & Disposal of Waste*
Store recyclable and non-recyclable waste separately. Place liquid waste within a bermed, or secondary containment area. Cover outdoor storage areas to prevent contact with rain water. Collect used parts for delivery to a scrap metal dealer.
- *Cleaning Vehicles & Engines*
For occasional car exterior cleaning, minimize the water used and divert runoff to landscaped areas, keeping it out of the storm drain. Wash vehicles with biodegradable, phosphate-free detergent. Make sure no wastewater or steam cleaning is discharged where it may flow to a street, gutter, or storm drain.
- *Cleaning Work Areas*
Sweep or vacuum the shop floor frequently. Damp mop work areas. Do not hose down work areas into the street or gutter. Do not pour mop water into the parking lot, street, gutter or storm drain. Use non-toxic cleaning products whenever possible.