



## MANAGING CONCRETE AND MORTAR TO PROTECT WATER QUALITY

### WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?

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 (**City of Medford Code 4.850**) to discharge non-stormwater substances, including biodegradable substances, into the stormwater collection system, which includes street gutters, storm drains and open channels.

### 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 the stormwater lines, they 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're carried untreated directly into local streams and rivers. Here they can harm aquatic animals, fish, plants and those who eat the fish, as well as affecting downstream drinking water sources.

Most concrete workers manage wastes responsibly, but sometimes disposal options can be confusing. This information is designed to help you protect water quality and avoid penalties for your business. The result will be happier customers who appreciate your concern for their property and a safer environment.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO, PLAN AHEAD!

- Pour concrete, asphalt and seal coat during dry weather, if possible, so they can cure before stormwater flows across them, picking up pollutants and wastes, on its way to local creeks and waterways.
- Both at the yard and the construction site, store dry and wet materials under cover, 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.
- Place straw bales or other erosion prevention methods down slope to capture runoff, carrying mortar or cement before it can reach a storm drain or waterway.

- Build a gravel access using 2-3 inches of open grade crushed rock to protect adjoining roads and waterways from vehicle track out off the site.
- If you're mixing your own materials, mix up only the amount of fresh concrete or cement that you will use in a day. If you're using a concrete delivery service, encourage them to practice methods to protect water quality as described in this information.

### **PEPARE THE SITE**

- Cover catch basins and manholes when applying seal coat, slurry seal, fog seal, etc., or when performing saw cut operations.
- Park paving equipment over drip pans or absorbing materials since they tend to drip continuously. Dispose of the absorbent or drippings properly.
- Set up and operate small mixers on tarps or heavy plastic drop cloths to collect spills. Discard the spilled material safely.
- Be prepared to contain all wash water on soil, preferably in a bowl-shaped area, to prevent it from leaving the washout area.
- Designate an appropriate washout area on site and brief all concrete workers on its location and use.

### **DURING CONSTRUCTION**

- Shovel or vacuum saw-cut slurry and remove from the site. Do not allow it to flow into stormwater drains or open drainage ways where it ends up in local waterways.
- Wash down exposed aggregate concrete only when the wash water can flow onto a dirt area or drain onto a bermed surface from which it can be pumped and disposed of properly. Make sure runoff does not reach gutters or storm drains.
- Allow aggregate rinse to settle and pump only the water to the wastewater system.
- Never wash sweepings from exposed aggregate concrete into a street or storm drain. Collect and return to aggregate base stockpile or dispose 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 as fill or pay dumping fees for small amounts. Left in the street or pushed over a bank into a creek bed or stream, concrete debris may cause major problems for flood control, storm drain maintenance and the health of our environment.

## **CLEANING UP**

- Remove all excess concrete from the chute by using a squeegee or similar tool.
- Place all excess concrete in a form, box, holder or designated washout area where it may be removed when it is hardened. Clean all finishing tools in the wash out area.
- 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 where the water will flow into containment ponds or onto dirt. Wherever 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 dirt areas, not down the driveway or into the street or storm drain where they can solidify and cause blockages and local flooding.
- Dispose of small amounts of excess dry concrete, grout and mortar properly.
- Never bury waste material where it can leach into groundwater and contaminate drinking water sources.

## Pick Up The Phone

### City of Medford Resources

→	Business License	774-2025
→	Stormwater Information	774-2600
→	Stormwater Rate/Billing Information	774-2100
→	Pollution Complaints/Stormwater Discharge Violations	774-2600
→	Stormwater System Maintenance	774-2600
→	Disposal to the Wastewater Collection System	774-2750

### Hazardous Waste/Disposal Alternatives

- *Emergency Spills:*  
City of Medford 9-1-1
- *Hazardous Waste:*  
See the Telephone Yellow Pages
- *Recycling Services:*  
See the Telephone Yellow Pages
- *Discharge Permits:*  
Oregon State Department of Environmental Quality 776-6010/X246  
Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant 774-2750
- *Storage Considerations:*  
City of Medford Fire Marshall's Office 774-2318
- *Technical Assistance:*  
Oregon Department of Environmental Quality 776-6010X246