

September 1999



Alameda Countywide
Clean Water Program
A Consortium of Local Agencies

Fund Raising Carwash

In response to recent Federal and State water quality regulations and requirements, municipalities in Alameda County have joined to form the Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program (ACCWP).

The ACCWP consists of the Cities of Alameda, Albany, Berkeley, Dublin, Emeryville, Fremont, Hayward, Livermore, Newark, Oakland, Piedmont, Pleasanton, San Leandro, Union City, Alameda County, the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, and Zone 7 of the District.

The Goal of the ACCWP is to control discharges of pollutants to municipal storm drain systems (and local creeks and the San Francisco Bay). The ACCWP encourages using Best Management Practices to effectively eliminate illegal discharges and connections.

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.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) are methods and practices such as good housekeeping, spill prevention, or treatment measures to prevent or minimize pollutant discharges to municipal storm drain systems.

Illegal Discharges or Illicit Connections discharge non-storm water to municipal storm drain systems and contribute to water pollution.

Urban Runoff is rain and any other water that passes through and out of developed areas (streets, parking lots, roof tops, etc.) into the storm drain system and eventually to creeks and other waters.

Keeping pollutants out of our storm drain system protects our local creeks, reservoirs, and the San Francisco Bay. Materials swept, blown, or washed into the storm drains end up in these open waters where they degrade water quality and harm aquatic life. In general, wastewater discharged to the storm drains is illegal.

In addition to reviewing their own practices, municipalities participating in the Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program (ACCWP) have instituted a business education campaign and inspection program. Inspectors work with contractors and businesses to identify and control potential discharge of pollutants to the storm drain system. *Property and business owners are responsible for their contractors' practices.*

Car washes have long been a favorite fundraiser for scout troops, schools and other non-profit groups. They provide a needed service, can be done with little capital investment, and are very visible. Only in the last few years have we all become more aware of the environmental impact our car washes can have. Dirty water containing soaps, detergents, residue from exhaust fumes, gasoline, and motor oils are washed off of these cars and flow directly to the nearest storm drain.

All by itself, your car wash may not seem to be contributing that much. But collectively, each of these car washes, done on a regular basis as they are in our communities, contributes some very serious pollution. By following the common sense practices on the back of this sheet you can make a difference in the water quality and health of the San Francisco Bay.

If you need additional information concerning stormwater pollution and its prevention contact your local program representatives at **1-888-BAY-WISE**.

Best Management Practices

Follow these BMPs to control pollutant discharges. The objectives are: 1) to keep pollutants from contacting rain, and 2) to keep pollutants from being dumped or poured into the storm drains. The goal is "only rain in the storm drain."



- Find a sponsor for your carwash that uses a closed loop washing system—one that recycles its water. Do not hold your carwash at a facility that is not properly equipped. Popular host sites—such as service stations and parking lots—usually do not have the necessary connections to the sanitary sewer.
- Ask a local commercial carwash to donate a part of the days proceeds or see if they will allow you to market a special wash ticket.
- Hold your carwash at an industrial or commercial site that has a designated equipment/vehicle wash area. This wash pad must be directly connected to the sanitary sewer; the property owner is responsible for all necessary discharge permits.
- Rent a mobile washing system that can contain the water on the site and vacuum up any excess water. Although not inexpensive, collecting and rerouting the water is the only way to protect the storm drain system.
- Contact your city's local clean water program on how you can set up an area to drain wash water to the sanitary sewer. Call 1-888-BAYWISE.
- Be creative with new fundraising ideas. Ask neighbors to donate items for a flea market. Ask your Chamber of Commerce if any local merchants would pay to have flyers distributed. See if you can get sponsors to pledge money for a park or creek clean-up.

Biodegradable does not necessarily mean safe to the environment—these products often degrade faster, but are still toxic to aquatic life.

