



Storing and Maintaining Equipment and Vehicles



Why be concerned?

Dirty or leaking equipment and vehicles can deposit oil, grit, coolants, and other pollutants onto the ground. These pollutants can filter through soils to the groundwater table or be washed by stormwater into a lake, river or stream.

In addition, spills may occur during fueling and other maintenance activities. Designing outdoor maintenance areas to completely contain leaks and spills is an important part of protecting water quality.



Eight Steps to Preventing Water Pollution

1 Regularly maintain equipment and vehicles

- Keep equipment and vehicles clean and regularly inspect them for leaks. Immediately repair and clean up any leaks that are found. Wash equipment and vehicles according to the recommendations in **Series #3, Fact Sheet 3.2**.
- Calibrate equipment frequently to ensure proper operation.
- Drain all the fluids from equipment and vehicles before they are placed in seasonal or long-term storage. Remove fluids only in paved areas that are designed to contain spills. Recycle or otherwise properly dispose of drained fluids.

- Pave the area to prevent pollutants from filtering into the ground.
- Construct curbs or berms around the perimeter to contain spills and prevent stormwater from washing through the area.
- Connect drains to a holding area or the sanitary sewer. Don't allow storage, fueling or other maintenance areas to drain to any part of the stormwater management system. If you aren't sure where a drain leads, call Cobb County Storm Water Management, Water Quality Section for assistance. Before allowing fluids to drain to the sanitary sewer, call the Cobb County Office of Environmental Compliance and make sure they can be accepted.

2 Perform maintenance activities only in designated areas

Maintain equipment and vehicles indoors, if possible. If maintenance activities must take place outdoors, make sure they're performed only in designated areas that are clearly marked and designed to prevent water pollution.

- Equip drains with shutoff valves in case of a spill and regularly inspect these valves to ensure they work. Alternatively, keep rubber mats or temporary plugs on hand to block drain inlets. If plugs are used, employees must be trained in advance on how to use them.

3 Properly design outdoor storage, fueling and other maintenance areas

- Don't locate outdoor storage, fueling, or maintenance areas within a floodplain or within 100 feet of any part of the stormwater management system.

- Cover storage and maintenance areas to keep rainwater from entering and mixing with pollutants. If rainwater accumulates and becomes contaminated, it must be pumped out and disposed of at an approved facility. For more information about disposing of accumulated rainwater, see **Series #1, Fact Sheet 1.1**.

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4 Keep service areas clean and take steps to prevent spills

Keep drip pans and absorbent materials readily available, appropriate to the types and quantities of potential spills. If possible, buy absorbent materials that can be reused or recycled: avoid the use of cat litter, since it's relatively inabsorbent (which increases waste) and must be landfilled. For more information about preventing and cleaning up spills, see **Series #1, Fact Sheet 1.2**.

When cleaning floors, prevent pollutants from entering the storm sewer system. The following three-step process is recommended:

1. clean up spills with absorbent materials
2. sweep the floor
3. wet mop and recycle wash water or dispose of it via the sanitary sewer.

5 Prevent overfilling gas tanks

Gasoline and other fuels are toxic and can be highly flammable. Unfortunately, spills are common during fueling activities.

- Make sure that dispensing hoses are equipped with automatic shutoff valves and that these valves work.
- Post signs instructing fuel pump operators not to overfill gas tanks or leave them unattended while fueling.
- Locate temporary fuel tanks in a bermed, paved area. Design the area to completely contain at least 110% of the tank's total volume.
- Per state law, protect the area surrounding the fill pipe for underground gas tanks to prevent any spills from reaching the soil or groundwater.

6 Properly store, use and dispose of maintenance products

For information about storing maintenance products, see **Series #1, Fact Sheet 1.1**. For information about using and disposing of them, see **Series #7**.

7 Completely drain and recycle used oil filters

A used oil filter typically contains 1/3 of a quart of oil and sludge, as well as acid and heavy metals. If not properly drained, used filters can leak this contaminated oil into the environment.

Drain used oil filters for at least 24 hours and then recycle both the oil and filters. If you can't recycle them, filters can be put into the trash provided they're *not* terne-coated. (The EPA classifies oil and transmission filters as non-hazardous if they *aren't* terne-coated and they *are* completely drained.)

8 Discharge equipment condensate and "blowdown" to the sanitary sewer

Air compressors and other equipment may produce small quantities of automatic blowdown water, which contains lubricating oil and other pollutants. Prevent blowdown water from soaking into the ground or running into the storm sewer system. Connect blowdown to the sanitary sewer or, if the compressor has a frequent small bleed, use a drip pan or catchment to collect the water.

GETTING HELP

Cobb County Office of Environmental Compliance(770) 419-6422

Cobb County Stormwater Management ... (770) 419-6435
Water Quality Section (770) 419-6441

Community Partners for Healthy Streams (770) 528-1482