



CLEANING YOUR HOME CARPETS

People caring for their homes can unknowingly impact local waterways through the improper disposal of wash water from carpet cleaning. The gutters along our streets lead to storm drains that flow directly to local creeks. If disposed of improperly, materials found in carpet cleaning wash water, such as solvents, dirt, and soapy water can be harmful to water quality and creek habitats. Wash water should never be discharged to a street, gutter, parking lot, driveway, or storm drain.

Products labeled “nontoxic” and “biodegradable” can still harm wildlife if they enter the storm drain system. These products are prohibited discharges to the storm drain system.

HOW ARE THE STORM DRAIN AND SANITARY SEWER SYSTEMS DIFFERENT?

The storm drain system transports rainwater to local creeks, rivers, and the ocean. This system was created to prevent flooding within communities and homes.

All water and materials that enter the storm drain system are untreated.

The sanitary sewer is a plumbed system that transports used water from buildings to a wastewater collection and treatment facility, where the water and sewage is treated.

If you see an outdoor drain and are unsure of its use, assume it is a storm drain and do not discharge wash water to it.

Clean creeks are important. They provide vital fish habitat, recreation, and add to the beauty of our city.

If you clean your own carpets, rugs or upholstery, follow these steps:

- Remove the wastewater collection container from the carpet cleaner, following the manufacturer’s instructions.
- Separate the liquid wastewater from the solid waste particles using a strainer. Solid waste particles, such as hair, can clog drains. Use a bucket to collect the liquid as it goes through the strainer.
- Pour the wastewater from the bucket into a toilet, sink or floor drain. These drains lead to the sewer and treatment plant, where wastewater is treated and chemicals are removed.
- Discard solid waste particles in the trash.
- Rinse the bucket, strainer, and wastewater container using clean water. Dispose of rinse water into a toilet, sink or floor drain.

BEST PRACTICES

- Dry method first: Vacuum debris off carpets before cleaning the carpeted area to reduce the material in wash water.
- Drain wash water to a sewer clean-out or collect the wash water and pour into an inside drain.
- Filter wash water through a wire mesh strainer and place any solids into the trash.

WHERE CAN YOU DISPOSE OF WASH WATER?

All carpet cleaners who conduct cleaning operations and generate wash water must perform cleaning operations based on established Best Management Practices (BMPs).

With permission from the sanitary district and the property owner, wash water from carpet cleaners can be discharged into a:

1. Floor, Utility or Mop Sink
2. Toilet
3. Drain connected to sanitary sewer system

QUICK TIPS

- Never pour water that contains carpet cleaning chemicals on the ground or into a storm drain. It must be discharged to the sanitary sewer.
- If you are having your carpets, rugs or upholstery cleaned by a carpet cleaning business, make sure your carpet cleaner knows and follows appropriate practices. Ask your cleaner how they intend to dispose of waste.

Releasing pollutants into the storm drain system or a waterway is prohibited by local ordinance, state, and federal law.

For an emergency or a spill involving hazardous materials or hazardous waste call 911 or your local Fire Department.

For All Non-Emergency / Non-Hazardous Spills

- To report a Non-Hazardous spill, or for other useful phone numbers, see Spill Numbers informational reference sheet for your local agency contact information or visit:
<https://www.streetstocreeks.org/spill-numbers/>

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HAVE QUESTIONS?

Use the QR code to find your local stormwater contact or visit:
mcstoppp.org/illegal-discharge-contacts



www.mcstoppp.org

(415) 473-6528

mcstoppp@marincounty.org

www.StreetstoCreeks.org