

## **Best Management Practises for Industrial Stormwater: Controlling Pollutants and Sediments from Construction and Renovation Projects**

### **Protecting our waterways starts at the drain**

Did you know that stormwater drains in your work area often lead directly into creeks, rivers, and lakes - without any treatment?

That means anything going down those drains, such as cement slurry, paint, oil, or even dirty water, goes straight into the environment.

Improper disposal of construction and renovation materials can:

- Damage sewer infrastructure, increasing maintenance costs
- Block drainage systems, causing localized flooding, property damage and safety risks
- Pollute water bodies, harming fish, aquatic plants, and wildlife

Discharging Prohibited Material including sediment or other pollutants into storm sewers is illegal. It violates the City of Ottawa's [Sewer Use By-law \(2025-94\)](#), as well as provincial and federal environmental regulations. Violators may face fines and be responsible for cleanup costs.

### **Prohibited Construction and Renovation Waste**

The following materials must never enter a storm drain, catch basin, ditch, or sewer:

- Cement, concrete washout, grout, mortar, drywall dust, or residue
- Tile cutting slurry, or wastewater
- Paint, primer, and paint wash water
- Soaps, detergents, solvents, or chemical cleaners
- Soil, sediment, or other solids
- Fuel, motor oil, antifreeze, or transmission fluid
- General debris, litter, and refuse
- Wastewater from industrial activities
- Any matter from an industrial operation

Refer to By-law 2025-94 for the full list of [Prohibited Materials](#).

Whether you're building, renovating, or working outdoors, follow these three steps to stop harmful materials such as, sediment, paint, or wash water from entering the storm drain and polluting the environment:

#### **1. Block the flow**

- Identify all nearby catch basins, culverts, and storm drains
- Use covers, berms, plugs, or socks to block access to drains
- Divert runoff from cutting, washing, or equipment cleaning activities

#### **2. Minimize the spread**

- Keep contaminants contained to the immediate work area using berms or barriers
- Limit the amount of water used for sawcutting—only use what is necessary

- Avoid hosing down cutting areas or rinsing equipment and materials into the street or drain
- Prevent vehicles and foot traffic from tracking sediment offsite

### **3. Collect and remove waste responsibly**

- Clean work areas immediately after cutting or washing
- Use wet / dry vacuums, absorbent materials, or pump systems to collect water and solids
- Sweep or vacuum up any residue - never allow sediment or wash water to drain offsite
- Dispose of solids and wastewater properly:
  - If onsite disposal is permitted, allow sediment to settle and decant the water into the ground
  - Sweep or vacuum remaining residue – do not hose it away
  - Ensure no residue that can dry and become airborne dust is left behind
  - Consult the City's [hazardous waste and special items](#) page to learn more about the disposal of hazardous waste materials

Every job site has an impact. Make yours a positive one by following best practices, staying compliant, and protecting Ottawa's waterways and your community.

**For more information, contact the Sewer Use Program Duty Officer 613-580-2424 Extension 23326**