



# Stormwater Best Management Practices For Sprinkler Testing



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Bay Area Stormwater Management  
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## Only rain down the storm drain...



Fire sprinkler testing has the potential to discharge water with pollutants to the storm drain. The water entering the system is usually potable water though in some areas it may be non-potable reclaimed wastewater. Rust and oil in pipes, nitrates, polyphosphates, and other corrosion inhibitors, as well as fire suppressants and antifreeze may be added to the sprinkler water system reducing the quality of the water. The water generally becomes anoxic and contains living and dead bacteria and breakdown products from chlorination. In addition, the water in the sprinkler system may stay stagnant for up to a year between flushes and may accumulate iron, manganese, lead, copper, nickel, and zinc. These pollutants should never be discharged to a street, gutter, parking lot or storm drain. If discharged, these substances can degrade water quality and creek habitats. Individuals and businesses who improperly handle and dispose of materials down the storm drain are subject to fines and criminal prosecution. The sanitary system carries wastewater (mostly from indoor plumbing) to a sewage treatment plant before the treated water discharges to the Bay or Delta.

## Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Testing Fire Sprinklers

A BMP is a technique, measure or structural control that is used for a given set of conditions to improve the quality of the stormwater runoff in a cost-effective manner. Implementation of pollution prevention/good housekeeping measures may reduce or eliminate the need to implement other more costly or complicated procedures. Proper employee training is key to the success of BMP implementation. Provided below are specific procedures associated with testing fire sprinklers. Owners/operators of fire sprinkler systems must select, install and maintain appropriate BMPs on site. Since the selection of the appropriate BMPs is a site-specific process, the types and numbers of additional BMPs will vary for each facility. For more information about fire sprinkler BMPs, please refer to the "water-Based Fire Protection Systems Discharge Best Management Practices Manual" by the CA State Fire Marshal, written September 2011.



### SPRINKLER SYSTEM PLANNED DISCHARGES

- Develop a plan that covers spill prevention and response. Include cleanup and disposal instructions for testwaters.

- Control flows onsite and/or direct the water flows to landscaped or dirt areas whenever possible and safe to do so without causing damage or erosion.
- Assign trained employees to manage spill cleanup.
- Block the storm drains within test area using mats taped over drains and barriers to divert water flows.
- Conduct testing on non-rainy days and for the shortest duration possible to minimize discharge volume.
- Inspect flow path and remove all debris and materials prior to testing or maintenance.



### PROVIDE TRAINING

- Owners, managers, and/or team leaders are responsible for training employees to identify and protect storm drains by using pollution prevention practices.
- Post a plan and post signs to remind employees about BMPs. For example, post a sign on your testing schedule that says, "Protect Storm Drains Before Testing".
- Stencil storm drains on or near your property with a "No Dumping-Drains to Bay" message. Call your local municipality to get stenciling materials.
- Provide on-going employee training in pollution prevention and log when training was completed.