



## Environmental Protection Advisory Bulletin

### **Masonry and Drywall Practices**

*This advisory is to seek your assistance in the prevention of storm drain contamination.*

Masonry and drywall operations use mortar and filler putties to finish projects. After the project is completed, tools and other machinery are rinsed before the mortar or fillers can harden. Also, acid solutions are used to remove excess mortar from bricks.

Rinsing of mortars and fillers to the storm drain system create the following problems:

- The mortars and fillers will solidify in the curbs, gutters, drains and pipes, restricting water flow or causing blockages.
- The rinse waters from cleaning tools and machinery are highly alkaline and the solutions used to clean excess mortar from bricks are very acidic. This wastewater contains fine particles and chemicals harmful to fish and aquatic life in receiving watercourses.

Excess mortar, fillers, and wash-off waters from masonry and drywall activities must not enter the storm drain system. This is an important issue in Port Coquitlam as the storm drains (the roadside and parking lot drains) are separate from the sanitary sewer and discharge untreated into local creeks and streams. There are over 30 km of open creeks and streams in Port Coquitlam. These creeks form an important network of watercourses, which provide natural habitat for salmon, trout, and other aquatic life.

### **Best Management Practices**

To prevent contaminants from entering the storm drain system and ultimately our creeks and rivers please observe the following practices:

#### **On-Site Disposal:**

- Direct leftover mortar and fillers, rinse water, and acid wash waters to areas on the construction site where the sediments will be filtered out in the soil. Do not allow washings to enter the storm drain system, sanitary sewer system or any watercourse.
- Dispose of wastewater from cleaning applicators, tools, pails and any other equipment to temporary percolating pits or trenches that will hold all wash-off water. Use berms in conjunction with these methods where necessary to prevent wash-off water from reaching the storm drain.
- Use a compacted granular sand and gravel base to absorb wash-off water where soils are impermeable.
- Infiltration basins must be located as far as possible from drainage ditches, drain tiles and water wells. Where this is not possible use proper off-site disposal practices.

#### **Off-Site Disposal:**

- If wash-off waters cannot be directed to suitable areas on the construction site, they must be contained, collected, and disposed at an approved off-site facility.
- Excess gypsum board should be recycled at local gypsum recycling companies.
- Ensure that all employees are aware of their important role in preventing storm drain contamination.

## Spills

Spills must be contained and cleaned up immediately to prevent the material from entering the drainage or sanitary sewer systems. Please follow the clean-up procedures as listed in the product's Material Safety Data Sheet.

Some chemicals may be flammable, toxic, corrosive, or have other hazardous properties. Call the **Fire Department** immediately at **911** or the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, **Provincial Emergency Program** at **1-800-663-3456**, if in doubt about any spill situation.

## Enforcement

Section 11 of the City of Port Coquitlam *Sewer Maintenance Bylaw*, 1971, No. 1091 states that:

11. No gasoline, napha, or other inflammable liquid or explosive substance, and no grease, oil, lye, free acid, mud, grit, plaster of paris, lime, clay or any other trade or industrial waste which may injure, or impair the efficiency or safety of the sanitary sewer system or storm drain system, through deposits forming in same or owing to the attacking and weakening of such sanitary sewer or storm drain, shall be discharged into any sanitary sewer system or storm drain system within the City.

In addition, The City of Port Coquitlam *Waterways Protection Bylaw*, 1969, No. 917 Section 2 states that:

2. Every person is prohibited from polluting any stream, creek, waterway, watercourse, waterworks, ditch, drain, or sewer, whether or not it is located on private property.

**Violators of the provisions of these bylaws shall be guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction and shall be liable to a fine of at least \$200.00 and up to \$2,000.00 and imprisonment for up to six months. Also, violators will be held responsible for any associated clean up costs.**

Persons responsible for storm drain contamination could also be liable under the following environmental legislation:

- The Federal Fisheries Act
- The Provincial Waste Management Act
- The Provincial Fish Protection Act

**For further information contact:** Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection: Phone: 604-582-5200  
Port Coquitlam, Engineering Department: Phone: 604-927-5420

This bulletin is provided as a guide only. The information is compiled from various sources and is NOT warranted as to its accuracy and sufficiency by the City of Port Coquitlam. It is the responsibility of the business licence applicant to comply with all applicable bylaws and legislation.