

FACT SHEET

ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH & SAFETY INFORMATION FOR THE BERKELEY CAMPUS

No. 57

Keeping Strawberry Creek Clean

Responsibilities and Regulations

It is the responsibility of all faculty, staff, students, and visitors to ensure that we live and work in a safe and healthy environment. The Office of Environment, Health & Safety (EH&S) provides guidance for the Storm Water Pollution Prevention program. This pollution prevention program covers all water discharges to the storm drain system, even during dry weather.

All storm drains on campus drain to Strawberry Creek and to San Francisco Bay untreated. Federal, state, and local laws prohibit discharging any solids or liquids to storm drains except clean rainwater. (There are some exceptions, but the list is short and limited to discharges such as air conditioning condensation, irrigation, and emergency fire fighting.)



Strawberry Creek is a great treasure for all to enjoy. Your help is needed to preserve this precious resource.



Strawberry Creek as it flows through the central campus

Report spills and polluted discharges immediately to:

EH&S 642-3073
UC Police 642-6760



Office of Environment, Health & Safety
University of California, Berkeley
317 University Hall, # 1150
Berkeley, CA 94720-1150

<http://www.ehs.berkeley.edu>
(510) 642-3073

Types of Drainage Systems

There are two types of drainage systems maintained by the University of California, Berkeley, that tie into the city's systems: sanitary sewers and storm drains.

Sanitary sewers collect the wastewater generated inside buildings, such as sink and toilet discharges. The wastewater is then transported through the system to the East Bay Municipal Utilities District wastewater treatment plant in Oakland, where it is treated before being discharged to San Francisco Bay.

Storm drains are open drains on streets, parking lots, loading docks, roofs, and any other surfaces that receive rain water. Berkeley storm drains discharge water—as well as the pollutants and litter it picks up—into Strawberry Creek and San Francisco Bay without any form of treatment. Because this water receives no treatment, it is especially important to keep pollutants out.



Discharges to the sanitary sewer flow to the East Bay Municipal Utilities District's (EBMUD) wastewater treatment plant where it is treated before being discharged to San Francisco Bay.



Note the pipe on the right. Discharges to the storm drain flow directly into Strawberry Creek and San Francisco Bay untreated.

Beneficial Water Uses Affected by Pollution

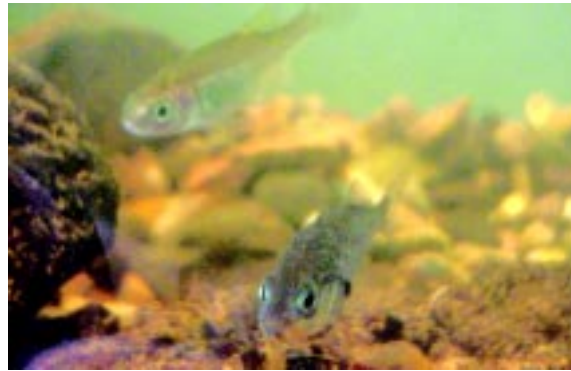
- Habitat for aquatic species such as fish and insects
- Aesthetic and recreational enjoyment
- Education and research

Causes of Water Pollution

- Rainwater draining to the storm water system that comes in contact with pollutants, such as oil, litter, heavy metals, pesticides, fertilizers, and sediment already on the ground
- Improper disposal of substances into the storm drain system, such as food waste, paint waste, mop water, landscape chemicals, and automotive fluids
- Illicit connections: drains that are supposed to discharge to the sanitary sewer but are currently connected to the storm drain system



Clean creeks are a benefit to the public.



Strawberry Creek inhabitants include the three-spined stickleback and roach minnow.



White latex paint discharged into the creek. Campus employees play an important role in protecting Strawberry Creek.

Common Water Pollutants

Oil and grease (leaky cars, kitchen waste)

Heavy metals (copper and zinc from brake and tire wear deposited as dust)

Nutrients (fertilizers)

Chemicals (pesticides, detergents)

Mud and sediment (landscape, construction activities)

Litter (cigarettes, food packaging, flyers, and newspaper)

Coliform bacteria (from animal or human excrement)

Prevent Water Pollution on the Job

The following are some Best Management Practices (BMPs) that must be implemented to eliminate polluted water discharges to the storm drain system:

- ❖ Reduce or eliminate chemical pesticides or fertilizers from landscaping and lawns.
- ❖ Maintain chemical storage areas appropriately. Cover chemicals and use secondary containment.
- ❖ Collect and properly dispose of wash water to the sanitary sewer or landscaped areas.
- ❖ Dispose of waste appropriately and cover dumpsters and garbage cans.
- ❖ Wash vehicles and equipment at car washes that recycle the wash water, or discharge the wash water to a sanitary sewer.
- ❖ Dry sweep or vacuum instead of washing down to storm drains.
- ❖ Keep storm drains clear of debris, dirt, sand, silt, and wastes.
- ❖ Perform vehicle maintenance and repair at approved locations.
- ❖ Implement spill prevention and response for chemical storage areas.
- ❖ Implement sediment and erosion prevention.

If you have questions about approved discharges into the storm drain system or the sanitary sewer system, call your Department Safety Coordinator (DSC) or the Office of Environment, Health & Safety (EH&S) at 642-3073.

Spill Reporting

Immediately report all spills and polluted water discharges to your DSC, UC Police (642-6760), or EH&S (642-3073).

What You Can Do at Home

Don't dump anything into the storm drains.

Pick up litter in your neighborhood.

Wash your car on a landscaped area where soapy water can infiltrate into the soil and degrade, or take it to a car wash where water is recycled or discharged to the sanitary sewer.

Report spills and discharges to your local city agency.

Do your home gardening and landscaping organically.

Eliminate or minimize your use of pesticides and fertilizers to reduce runoff to the creek.

Use native landscaping to replace grass lawns to increase rainwater infiltration and reduce runoff.

Route rooftop downspouts into landscaped areas.