

Flood Water Discharges from Elevator Service Pits and Sumps

Scope

This procedure applies to any discharge of flood water from elevator service pits with the exception of those situations where life safety or catastrophic property damage is threatened.

This procedure is intended to prevent the release of prohibited pollutants to either the sanitary sewer system or storm system that would cause a violation of applicable regulations or ordinances or would otherwise cause significant harm to either surface waters, the surrounding environment or the sanitary sewer system.

This procedure provides guidance to workers who encounter accumulated water that must be removed from elevator service pits in order to perform maintenance, inspection, installation, or repair of machinery and systems.

This procedure applies to personnel most likely to discover or respond to flooded elevator service pits such as Facilities Services, Residential Student Services, building or department trades people, building coordinators, or similar.

Discussion

Elevator pits on campus may flood with water due to their low-lying nature. This water may contact surfaces that have varying levels of contaminants ranging from simple trace residues to significant quantities of stored or spilled materials (dust, lubricants, hydraulic fluids, etc.). Improperly discharging this water to either the surface water storm system or the sanitary sewer system could result in damage to the environment as well as a violation of regulations designed to prevent discharges of polluted water.

The prevention of these potentially damaging discharges of contaminated water is best achieved by eliminating as much as is practicable the infiltration of water into interior spaces and buildings on campus. Capital improvement programs are addressing these instances in a systematic manner over the longer term based on severity and funding.

In the shorter term, by developing this procedure and training appropriate personnel in its use, improper discharges of accumulated water from elevator pits may be eliminated.

Procedure

1. Upon discovery or notification of a flooded service pit, personnel must immediately notify their supervisor of the situation but refrain from discharging any water. Any sump pumps or valves known to drain the space should be secure in the off or closed position to prevent the unplanned release of water from the flooded area.

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Personnel shall refrain from entering the flooded space until potential safety hazards (sources of electricity, hazardous materials, dangerous atmosphere, or physical hazards such as sharp or protruding obstructions) can be identified and eliminated or controlled. Initial responders should also isolate the source of the accumulating water if feasible to do so (i.e., turn off isolating valves, sand bag or cover inlets, plug or seal conduits or lines).

2. Only supervisory personnel trained in this procedure will determine the presence of absence of contaminants in accumulated water. This will be done primarily through visual observations of the water (for sheen, color, turbidity) and by taking note of any odors present. Determination will also include an investigation of the path and source of the water.

In addition, responding personnel will consult with persons familiar with the processes located in the immediate area and will review the use of the flooded area to determine whether or not a source of contaminants are in contact with accumulated water. Additional hazard categorization or even analysis may be required based on investigation of the flooded area. If there are reasonable doubts as to the presence of significant contaminants, do not pump or release the accumulated water.

3. If the water is suspected or proved to contain significant levels of contaminants, no pumping or other removal will take place until proper containment can be procured (i.e., drums, portable tanks, vacuum truck). Contact EH&S to assist in analysis of the collected water and determination of the disposal method.
4. If the source of the accumulated water is determined to be from domestic (drinking) water supply lines or domestic sewage lines and, upon assessment by a supervisor, determined to be free of prohibited materials (i.e., oil, fuel, paint, hydraulic fluid, coolants, etc.), this water may be pumped to sanitary sewer.
5. If the source of accumulated water is found to be surface water from a storm event and is determined by a supervisor to be free of significant contamination (i.e., no chemicals or suspended solids), discharge to the storm conveyance system is allowed.
6. Care will be taken to prevent wash water from clean-up activities from entering storm drains. Inlets will be plugged or blocked and temporary dikes placed to protect the storm system and allow collection of generated wash water.

Wash water generated during clean-up activities will also be characterized to determine whether sanitary sewer drain disposal is allowable. Wash waters containing prohibited substances or exhibiting hazardous waste characteristics may not be discharged to the sewer and must be contained for off-site treatment. Contact EH&S for assistance.

7. Responding personnel will conduct a post clean-up investigation to determine both the source and path of the floodwater and develop a written action plan to prevent future occurrences. Plans must be kept on record and made available to authorized agency representatives upon request (East Bay

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Municipal Utility District [EBMUD], Regional Water Quality Control Board [RWQCB], Department of Fish and Wildlife [DWF], and City of Berkeley [COB]).

Essential Contacts

Name	Phone Number	
	Business Hours	Off-Hours
Facilities Services (FS)	(510) 642-6556	(510) 642-6556
Residential Student Services Programs (RSSP)	(510) 642-2828	(510) 642-2828
Environment, Health & Safety (EH&S)	(510) 642-3073	(510) 642-6760

Training

Personnel likely to be called to respond to flooded spaces shall be trained in this procedure and records of this training shall be made available upon request to authorized agency representatives. Training will include a discussion of means and methods to be used to determine the presence of contaminants in accumulated flood waters.