

Seattle's Stormwater Management Program

● Overview

The City of Seattle is committed to reducing pollution in stormwater and local waterways. This is part of Seattle Public Utilities' (SPU's) mission and is also required by our Municipal Stormwater Permit (Permit). The Permit is how state regulators ensure we are meeting our Clean Water Act responsibilities for managing stormwater.

Seattle's Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) is described in a Plan that is updated annually and serves as the City's roadmap for meeting the Permit's requirements and our clean stormwater goals. **This fact sheet outlines the key elements of our SWMP Plan.** For more details visit: [Seattle's SWMP Plan](#)

● Goals

Broadly, Seattle's SWMP is designed to better manage stormwater quantity and quality through:

- 1) effective stormwater management tools and best management practices (BMPs), using traditional and innovative approaches,
- 2) adaptive pollution reduction strategies, rooted in sound science and engineering,
- 3) wise use of resources, and
- 4) community engagement.



● Key SWMP Elements

Establish and enforce laws and regulations

We establish, and ensure compliance with, laws and regulations for managing runoff and preventing pollution in Seattle. We develop the City of Seattle's Stormwater Code and Manual and have authority to issue fines and take actions against polluters.

Manage stormwater volumes and reduce stormwater pollution

We retrofit the City's stormwater system with new or updated infrastructure designed to better control flows and remove pollutants, inspect and provide technical assistance to businesses that generate stormwater pollutants, operate a pollution hotline and spill response team, work to eliminate illegal connections to the stormwater system, and more.

Develop and enforce development and construction rules

The City ensures that new and redeveloped properties use pollution-reducing practices to slow, filter, and clean runoff before it enters the City's stormwater system. We review site drainage plans, conduct inspections, and enforce strict erosion/sediment controls before, during and after construction.



- **Stormwater** is rain and snowmelt that runs off roofs, streets, sidewalks, and other hard surfaces. As it flows, it can pick up pollutants like oil, metals, soap, sediment, litter, fertilizer, pesticides, and other toxic chemicals. These pollutants can enter creeks and rivers, lakes, and Puget Sound.
- **Best Management Practices (BMPs)** are activities, procedures and structural elements that, when used by themselves or in combination, prevent or reduce the release of pollutants to waterways.

Coordinate activities with partners

The Permit applies to the City as a whole and SPU leads an interdepartmental team to coordinate SWMP implementation and Permit compliance. We also coordinate with external partners, like Port of Seattle and UW, who manage stormwater systems in the City.

Complement Lower Duwamish Waterway (LDW) Superfund cleanup

To prevent recontamination of sediment in the LDW, SPU works hard to find, trace and eliminate sources of pollution, clean stormwater pipes, conduct targeted street sweeping, and more.

Develop effective long-term strategies

We work on planning efforts such as [Shape Our Water](#) and the [One Seattle Plan](#) to guide long-term investments in stormwater infrastructure.

Inspect and maintain infrastructure

We regularly inspect and maintain City stormwater assets like bioretention cells, vaults, ponds, and catch basins, and inspect privately-owned stormwater facilities to ensure the systems work effectively. Some City properties, like maintenance yards, also follow site-specific stormwater pollution prevention plans.

Engage our community

We work in our community to engage in environmental stewardship, to participate in stormwater planning and decision-making, and to help people change their behaviors to reduce pollution in their homes, neighborhoods, schools and workplaces.

● You Can Help!

Take action today to prevent stormwater pollution - only allow **clean, clear, and cold** water to enter a storm drain!

Daily actions that make a difference

- Pick up pet waste and dispose of it in the garbage.
- Wash cars at a commercial car wash, not on the street or driveways
- Practice natural yard care methods. Only use organic pesticides and fertilizers when needed.
- Only allow rain water down your storm drain. Protect it from dirt, soap, paint, or chemicals.
- Rake and remove leaves and debris from streets and storm drains.
- Store chemicals undercover, clean up spills, and dispose of chemicals properly using hazardous waste disposal services.
- Be a responsible business owner – follow all required Best Management Practices in the [Stormwater Manual](#).



Before inspection

SPU conducts business inspections to ensure businesses carry out BMPs, minimizing stormwater pollution.



After inspection

● Report Concerns

For urgent/emergency issues:

Report spills or pollution that impact drainage systems or surface waters to SPU's 24/7 Operations Response Center at (206) 386-1800 (response within 2-hours).

For less immediate concerns:

Report these to the water quality complaint line at (206) 684-7587 or fill out the [water pollution report form](#) (response within 3-business days).

More ways to get involved

- Stencil or Adopt a Storm Drain: [Storm Drain Care](#)
- Be a Green Business: [SPU Green Business Program](#)
- Build a Sustainable Landscape: [Garden Hotline](#)

Questions about Seattle's Stormwater Management Program?
Contact: swmp@seattle.gov



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