

FLOOR DRAINS / FLOOR CLEANING



Thurston County Business Pollution Prevention Program

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THE PROBLEM WITH FLOOR DRAINS

Many types of businesses use floor drains as an easy way to dispose of wastewater or other wastes. What many business owners don't realize is that putting wastes down floor drains may violate federal, state and county laws. Many floor drains send waste liquids directly to dry wells, storm drains, septic systems, pits, or ditches and not to a sewer system. Wastewater or chemical spills entering these types of drains can contaminate drinking water, streams, or lakes. Disposing of chemicals down a drain is never permitted.

DISCHARGE LOCATION

It is important to know where your floor drains discharge. If your business is connected to the local wastewater treatment plant, it is likely that the drains are too. Dye testing can confirm if your drains are connected to sewer or an onsite septic system. If dye testing does not confirm where your drains discharge, the assumption is they drain directly to an underground system. Call Thurston County's Business Pollution Prevention Program for help in identifying where your drains lead if you need assistance.

- 💧 If your floor drain is connected to a public sewer system, you still need to meet local sewer discharge limits for chemicals that are discharged into it. Using an oil/water separator that drains to the public sewer system may remove some oil-based pollutants but requires a permit from the wastewater treatment facility.
- 💧 Oil/water separators cannot be plumbed to drains that discharge to septic systems or dry wells. Chemicals generated from business activities cannot be discharged to a drain that leads to a septic system or dry well.

FLOOR CLEANING AND PROTECTING YOUR FLOOR DRAIN

Wash water from floor cleaning may contain chemical contaminants, most commonly oils, solvents, and other automotive fluids. Wash water that enters the floor drain can negatively impact the environment and result in violations and costly cleanups. If your floor drains need to remain functional, there are several ways to protect these drains from chemical releases:

- 💧 Provide secondary containment for all liquid hazardous materials.
- 💧 Use drum funnels, spigots, or pump dispensers to prevent spills.
- 💧 Place absorbent pads under work areas where chemical spills may occur.
- 💧 Have shop rags and spill kits available where liquid chemicals and hazardous wastes are stored.
- 💧 Install drain plugs that can be removed when the drain is needed but prevent spills from entering drain.
- 💧 Dry sweep and spot-mop floors frequently to minimize the need for entire floor mopping.
- 💧 Minimize the use of water when cleaning floors.
- 💧 Do not use solvents or hazardous chemicals to clean floors.
- 💧 Consider sealing your shop floor to make chemical spills easier to clean up and to prevent contamination of the concrete and soil beneath it.

KEEP A RECORD OF YOUR ACTIONS

If you permanently seal off a floor drain, create a record of the date when the drain was sealed, and the physical location of the drain. Keep detailed records of industrial processes that create discharges into any drains that are connected to a sanitary sewer to demonstrate that you have met discharge permit requirements. Accurate information about the history of your drains may be important if the property is offered for sale, and it could be useful in reducing liability in the case of an investigation of contaminated soil or ground water on your property or in the vicinity of your business.

For questions regarding wastewater discharge regulations in Thurston County, please contact Olympia's wastewater treatment facility - LOTT Alliance at (360) 664-2333.

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