

Pollution Prevention Training and Recognition Program for Surface Cleaners

Fact Sheet

Creating a model for coping with cleaning discharges

Outdoor cleaners—including surface cleaners, janitorial services, auto detailers, carpet cleaners, and window cleaners—have been identified as a significant source of discharges of material, wastes, and polluted waters to storm drain systems in the San Francisco Bay Area. The environmental impact, regulatory liability, and ubiquitous nature of discharges from outdoor cleaners make them a seemingly ideal candidate for regulation. Yet, regulators and regulated agencies have found it difficult to address these discharges for a variety of reasons. Consequently, the Bay Area Stormwater Management Agencies Association (BASMAA) initiated a pilot program in 1996 to help break through the barriers to regulation and establish a model for dealing with discharges of this type.

The pilot program was focused on surface cleaners as a subset of outdoor cleaners. Surface cleaners include steam cleaners and pressure washers who clean sidewalks, plazas, parking areas, driveways, drive-throughs, and building surfaces. This surface cleaner pilot program also served as a case study for future development of additional materials and approaches for the remaining types of outdoor cleaners.

Responding to the need for education of cleaners and customers

To develop the surface cleaners pilot program, meetings were held with surface cleaners and their customers in which the participants were given a chance to express opinions on what would constitute a successful program. The primary opinion was that the customers need educating, as well as the surface cleaners, to ensure that the value of hiring a responsible surface cleaner is understood. As a result, a program consisting of education and recognition was produced.

Recognition is given to surface cleaners who take online training or attend a training session and pass a test based on the training contents. BASMAA then issues a "Certificate of Recognition" to cleaners who pass, and provides a list of recognized cleaners to businesses and agencies who hire surface cleaners. By providing this list and outreach materials to customers (directly and through recognized cleaners), BASMAA helps promote such cleaners.

Providing flexible, ongoing education and training

Outreach/Recognition Workshops were held in 1996 to provide surface cleaners with the technical information required to protect the environment and comply with the law. Through these workshops, 236 surface cleaners became Recognized Cleaners for 1996-97. Additionally, they received outreach materials to share with their customers and promote their services.

1996-97 Recognized Cleaners were given a chance to earn a 1998 Certificate of

Recognition by mail. These cleaners reviewed the educational material, took the pollution prevention quiz, and returned the quiz to BASMAA. Upon satisfactory completion, 74 cleaners received their certificates and promotional outreach material.

Cleaners that missed the summer 2000 workshops were able to earn a 2000-2001 Certificate of Recognition through a local training session. Interested cleaners scheduled an appointment with a local municipality and/or treatment works to attend a local training session. In the session, participants reviewed a surface cleaning videotape, reviewed outreach materials, and took the pollution prevention quiz. Upon satisfactory completion, cleaners then received their certificates and promotional outreach material. The same process was used to train and re-train cleaners for their 2002-2003 Certificate of Recognition.

In 2005, BASMAA started providing training online via the Internet. The new self-serve training program is intended to replace the current system of local training sessions. To receive training, all that is required is to log on, register, and go through a multimedia presentation that includes a 13-minute video and a short quiz. After the trainee has viewed the entire presentation, they receive a customized certificate of training. BASMAA's database of recognized cleaners is automatically updated by the computer program and can be checked at any time to see the latest list of trained cleaners.

Distributing clear and simple outreach material

Materials for education, recognition, and promotion combine to help cleaners and customers do their part in source control.

For the cleaners and their customers:

BASMAA and local storm water programs sponsored training workshops around the Bay Area during the summer of 2000 for both previously trained and recognized cleaners as well as new cleaners.

Pollution from Surface Cleaning. This folder contains information for surface cleaners about the effects of wash water discharges to the storm drain system and the effective, low-cost pollution prevention practices to be used.

Pollution Prevention Quiz and Recognition Certificate. The true/false, multiple-choice quiz takes 15-20 minutes to complete. Surface cleaners who complete the quiz then receive a Certificate of Recognition from BASMAA. The certificate can be displayed to customers as proof that the cleaner is qualified to complete the job in an environmentally responsible manner.

We do the Job Right! This card is provided to Recognized Cleaners for distribution to potential customers. Surface cleaners use this card to proclaim their qualifications and their intent to prevent water pollution while conducting the cleaning work.

Pollution Prevention Voucher. This voucher is to be filled out in duplicate by a Recognized Cleaner upon completion of a cleaning project. Retention of a copy by both the cleaner and the customer provides a record for municipal or State inspectors of the type of surface cleaned, the cleaning method used, and how the wash water was disposed.

For the customers:

When You Contract for Surface Cleaning. . . This flyer is geared toward

customers who regularly hire surface cleaners. It alerts the customers about the outreach/recognition program and specifies the pollution prevention practices that should be used to prevent surface cleaning discharges to the storm drain system. The flyer is suitable for photocopying and is available for mass mailings by municipalities.

Database of Recognized Cleaners. This is a database of all Recognized Cleaners that is always up-to-date and can be checked at any time by going online. Municipalities use the database to promote recognized cleaners in their area, while potential customers use the database when soliciting bids for cleaning jobs.

For the local trainers:

Outreach/Recognition Training Kit. This kit enables local agencies to offer training sessions to cleaners that cannot use the Internet training.

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For more information about the Pollution Prevention Training and Recognition Program for Surface Cleaners, please contact BASMAA at: info@basmaa.org or (650) 365-8678.