

## MOBILE CLEANER TRAINING AND RECOGNITION: Introduction

Box:

Key definitions:

Sanitary sewer system: Pipes carrying wastewater from homes and businesses to the local wastewater treatment plant

Storm drain system: Pipes carrying rainwater or other runoff from outdoor surfaces to local creeks, bays, or the ocean – with no treatment

Cleanout: Usually a capped pipe on the building exterior, connected to the sanitary sewer

### Who can be recognized?

- Mobile surface cleaners
- Mobile vehicle cleaning/detailing service providers
- Mobile carpet and upholstery cleaners

### What types of cleaning are eligible for recognition?

- Flat work
- Building exteriors
- Sidewalks and plazas
- Parking lots and drive-throughs
- Auto washing/detailing
- Truck washing
- Fleet washing
- Carpet and upholstery cleaning

### Why is recognition important?

The Bay Area Stormwater Management Agencies Association (BASMAA) mobile cleaners recognition program is designed to show cleaners how to do their work in ways that protect water quality in our local creeks, bays, and the Pacific Ocean – while staying within the law. *In California, any discharge of a pollutant to a storm drain is illegal.* Cleaners and their customers are liable if pollution results from cleaning activities on private (or public) property.

BASMAA encourages local governments and businesses to hire *only* recognized cleaners. Re-recognition is required annually.

## Best Management Practices for Mobile Carpet / Upholstery Cleaners

*Note: Local governments generally accept these best management practices, however there are exceptions so before bidding on or starting a new job, check with the local stormwater and wastewater authority ([click here](#)) where the job is located to make sure you are following their best management practices and disposal requirements.*

*The goal of these BMPs is to keep pollution out of the storm drain system.*

*In order to do the job right, remember these simple concepts:*

1. All soaps and cleaning agents, including those labeled “biodegradable,” non-toxic,” and “organic” ARE toxic to aquatic life in local waters where storm drains discharge.
2. Carpet/upholstery cleaning wastewater can be discharged to the sanitary sewer through an outdoor cleanout or indoor drain (sink, utility sink, tub, or toilet) after it has been filtered to remove fibers and debris.
3. Filtered material can be put in the trash.
4. Exceptions to these rules:
  - Carpet/upholstery cleaning waste must NEVER be put down a drain where the property is on a septic system (as opposed to a municipal sanitary sewer system).
  - Wastewater containing hazardous materials either from the carpet or in cleaning products (such as mercury from broken thermometers or botanica uses, solvents, and enzyme spot cleaners) must be disposed of properly, as hazardous waste. Check with the local wastewater treatment authority for information.

*Before you clean ...*

1. Check with the wastewater treatment authority ([click here](#)) that serves your **business home base** to find out whether a permit is required to dispose of filtered cleaning water through a sink, sump, or drain at your place of business.
2. Determine whether the **client property** is on a municipal sewer or septic system. If on a sewer and the property owner agrees, you may be able to discharge filtered cleaning water to a sink, toilet, or cleanout on-site.
  - Carpet cleaning wastewater can never be discharged to a septic system. Plan to transport wastewater to your home base for disposal to the sanitary sewer.
3. Be sure your hoses, filters, tanks, pumps, etc. are in good condition, with capacity to contain all wastewater from the job.
4. Thoroughly vacuum the area to be cleaned, to minimize debris and fibers in the wash water.

*Prepare for Spills: Block nearby and down-slope storm drains and collect wastewater*

Spills happen! Because carpet cleaning wastewater is toxic to the aquatic organisms in local creeks, the Delta, the Bay, and the ocean, you need to be prepared to protect storm drains in case of an accident.

- Use rubber mats, sand bags, absorbent “pigs,” or inflatable berms to make a sump where you can pump spilled washwater to a tank.

- Dispose of collected water to the sanitary sewer, as you have arranged with the property owner and the wastewater treatment plant.
- Remove storm drain protection and other devices (e.g. sand bags, inflatable berms, absorbent pigs, etc.) before leaving the site. Remove all debris or sediment accumulated during washing activities and put in the trash, or if it is hazardous, dispose of it properly.