

## BMP 18      Cleaning Of Concrete And Paved Areas

Cleaning of streets, parking lots, and other paved areas is a common occurrence. Cleaning is done to improve the appearance of the surface, preserve and extend its life, and to prevent debris from accumulating and entering storm drains. Most concrete paved areas are newer constructed streets, sidewalks, curbs, and driveways. City streets are generally cleaned by the city sanitation department with a street cleaner. The street cleaner sweeps up broken glass particles, fine stones, and bits of crumbled cement, dirt, paper, plastics, and other displaced trash that has been blown, tracked, dropped, or dumped onto the street. Oil, grease, and other semi-liquid fluids remain behind. Most cities usually clean their streets two or more times a year.

On private property, sidewalk and driveway cleaning is left up to the owner. Care should be taken to prevent waste materials that build up on pavements from being transported to local streams in runoff. It is equally important to prevent the residue from cleaning materials from polluting streams. Remember the pollutants that impact our local streams affect others downstream.

**Prevent pavement stains.** If nuisance stains continually occur on your paved areas, then determine their source and eliminate them. Drip pans can be used under vehicles that leak fluids until they can be repaired. Drop cloths should be used to protect paved surfaces from spills during vehicle and home repair activities.

**Sweep the area clean first.** Use a broom, leaf blower, or shop vacuum to pick up debris.

**Wash the area.** Use a hose or pressure washer to clean the area. It is best to sweep the surface and remove larger loose debris first. Runoff water should be diverted to grassy areas or drains leading to sanitary sewer. Storm drains should be protected from untreated water runoff because of the potentially hazardous residues that may be present.

**Particular care should be taken when cleaning troublesome areas.** Stains on pavement such as accumulations of oil, grease, rust, and other materials should be removed by using the least environmentally harmful product available. Biodegradable soap is suggested for use in the clean up. Use a hard bristle brush to scrub these areas, then rinse with water, directing the rinse water to a drain leading to the sanitary sewer or toward a grassy area. Solvents are not recommended for use because they are highly toxic. If solvents are used, they should be applied as a spot cleaner in extremely small amounts using a rag. Always divert waste water away from storm drains.

**Consider runoff when removing ice in winter.** Salt, sand, and gravel are commonly applied to pavement when icy weather conditions occur. Salt can leave a residue on pavement which washes away when the ice (snow) melts or when it rains, and can be carried to the nearest storm drain in the runoff. Excessive salting, besides being costly, is also detrimental to any stream.