

---

**BULLETIN 2000-051-EV**

*Revised August 17, 2015*

---

## **PAINTING CONTRACTORS**

---

Paints and other architectural coatings contain materials that may be harmful to the environment. Paints, thinners and paint removers contain ingredients that may be flammable or toxic. When these materials or the washings from the equipment used to apply these materials are poured or placed in street drains, parking lot drains or other storm drains, they enter the storm sewer system. Storm sewers are connected to the nearest body of water where contaminants can be toxic to fish and the environment.

Solvents and paint thinners are also flammable and can create explosive conditions in our sewers and must not be allowed to enter any sewers or plumbing fixtures at any time.

When paint washings enter the sewer system or the environment, the colour is visible and can be easily traced back to the source. The City receives a number of complaints each year when paint washings are poured into the storm sewer system.

### **Best Management Practices**

To reduce the amount of contaminants entering the storm sewer system from painting contractors, at a minimum, the following are to be practised:

- Collect all wash-water used to clean equipment. Do not place or pour wash-water into the storm sewer system (street drains, parking lot drains or most outside drains) or in the garbage. Small quantities of wash water may be poured or placed in the sanitary sewer system under the following conditions:
  - a. Allow the solids to settle to the bottom of the collection vessel,
  - b. Once the solids have settled, pour off the liquid portion into a separate container and dispose of this portion into a sanitary sewer fixture (laundry sink, toilet, etc.)
  - c. Allow the solids to harden and place them in the garbage.
- Collect all solvents used to clean equipment. Solvents are not permitted to be placed or poured into any sewer or plumbing fixture at any time. Contact a waste disposal company that disposes or recycles solvents for disposal options. Household paint and solvents can be dropped off with no charge at designated recycling stations. A complete list of depots is available at [www.rcbc.ca](http://www.rcbc.ca).
- Leftover paint is not permitted to be placed or poured into any sewer or plumbing fixture or placed in the garbage. Re-use leftover paint or contact the manufacturer or supplier of the products for disposal options. Household paint and solvents can be dropped off with no charge at designated recycling stations. A complete list of depots is available at [www.rcbc.ca](http://www.rcbc.ca).

**Spills**

Spills of paints, thinners and paint removers must be cleaned up immediately. Spills must be contained and curbed to prevent the spill from entering the storm sewer system.

Spills onto City property, streets, or lanes must be reported to Engineering Services immediately at 3-1-1 or 604.873.7000.

**Enforcement**

Section 3.2(1) of the Sewer and Watercourse By-law No. 8093 states that, “No person shall cause or permit contaminated water or wastewater to be discharged to a storm sewer”. Violators are subject to fines of up to \$10,000 per offence.

For further information contact the Environmental Protection Branch at 3-1-1 or 604-873-7000 or at [environmentalprotection@vancouver.ca](mailto:environmentalprotection@vancouver.ca).

(Original signed by)

---

D. Robertson  
SUPERVISOR  
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION BRANCH