

Food Service Industry

FOOD INDUSTRY PROBLEMS

The byproducts of food-related businesses can harm the environment if they enter the storm drain system. Food businesses can cause harm by putting food waste in leaky dumpsters, not cleaning up outdoor food or chemical spills, or by washing outdoor spills into the storm drain system. Other routine activities such as cleaning oily vents and operating and maintaining delivery trucks are sources of pollution, unless proper precautions are taken. When it rains, motor oil that has dripped onto parking lots from business and customer vehicles is washed into the storm drain system. Oil and grease that makes its way into the environment can block oxygen from entering the water. And, toxins found in oven and floor cleaners can, in high concentrations, harm aquatic life.

SOLUTIONS

1. Minimize Wastes. Use non-disposable products. Serve food on ceramic dishware rather than paper, plastic or Styrofoam and use cloth napkins rather than paper ones. If you must use disposable products, use paper instead of Styrofoam. Buy the least toxic products available. Look for "nontoxic," "non-petroleum based," "free of ammonia, phosphates, dye or perfume," or "readily biodegradable" on the label. Avoid chlorinated compounds, petroleum distillates, phenols and formaldehyde. Use water-based products. Look for and use "recycled" and "recyclable" containers.

2. Keep Work Sites Clean. Cover, repair or replace leaky dumpsters and compactors, and/or drain the pavement beneath them to the sewer. Rain can wash oil, grease and substances into storm drains. Wash greasy equipment such as vents and vehicles in designated wash areas with an appropriate oil/water separator before storing outside. Ensure that designated wash areas are properly connected to the sewer system.

3. Recycle Wastes. Purchase recycled products. By doing so, you help ensure a use for recyclable materials. Recycle the following materials: Food waste (non-greasy, non-animal food waste can be composted); paper and cardboard; glass, aluminum and tin containers; pallets and drums; oil and grease. Separate wastes. Keep your recyclable wastes in separate containers according to the type of material. They are easier to recycle if separated.

4. Toxic Disposal. Toxic waste includes used cleaners, rags (soaked with solvents, floor cleaners and detergents) and automotive products (such as anti freeze, brake fluid, radiator flush and used batteries).

5. Employee & Client Education Employees can help prevent pollution when you include water quality training in employee orientation and reviews. Storage containers should be regularly inspected and kept in good condition. Place materials inside rigid, durable, water-tight and rodent-proof containers with tight fitting covers. Store materials inside a building or build a covered area that is paved and designed to prevent runoff from entering storm drains. Place plastic sheeting over materials or containers and secure the cover with ties and weighted objects. (Not appropriate for storing liquids.)

Showing customers you protect the environment is good public relations!



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