

# FIREFIGHTING ACTIVITIES

## BMP FACTSHEET 12 Rev. 04/2023



### DESCRIPTION

The possible pollutants being produced during firefighting related activities include: fire depression foam chemicals, ashes and soot, condensates, heavy metals and other suspended solids. These pollutants pose a threat to natural water ways and can be detrimental to fish and other aquatic organisms. The discharge of these harmful pollutants into storm drains can be reduced if proper Best Management Practices (BMP) are implemented and good housekeeping practices are followed. Discharges produced during fire training activities have the potential to enter the environment and containment waterways. It is important that training activities are performed in a manner that reduce the potential of harmful pollutants from entering our storm drains, ditches, inlets or swales. Under no condition is fire fighting discharge from training or purging of systems allowed under the Industrial Stormwater Permit Part III A.6. By implementing the following BMP's listed in the guidelines below firefighting activities can minimize impacts to water quality.

### Targeted Pollutants

Sediment	X
Nutrients	
Trash	
Metals	X
Bacteria	
Oil & Grease	
Chemicals	X
Salt	

### Objectives

Cover	X
Contain	X
Educate	X
Reduce/Minimize	X
Product Substitution	

### GUIDELINES

- Keep good housekeeping practices. Reference BMP Factsheet Overview for more details.
- When feasible, live and simulated fire training should be conducted at facilities that have been built and engineered specifically for training exercises. These facilities should have run-off controls that protect stormwater structures.
- If training cannot be conducted at a specially designed facility, additional pollution prevention actions will need to be taken before training begins. In order to prevent illicit discharges into stormwater structures:
  - The chosen training area must be sweep and cleaned prior to training to ensure debris does not enter stormwater structures.
  - Prevent discharge of foam or other additives to storm drains by blocking off all potentially effected stormwater structures. This can be done with sandbags, boons, plastic sheeting, and berms that divert that wash water away from stormwater structures.
  - If wash water is being diverted into a sanitary sewer line it is important to get permission from your local wastewater treatment facility before exercises are performed. Coordinate this well in advanced with the Drinking Water/Wastewater Program Manager for authorization at (703) 806-0137.
  - If spraying water over a landscape during training exercises is necessary, try and arch the water so that velocities are dissipated and there is less chance of soil erosion. Soil erosion leads to solid debris and sediment being carried away by wash water during the exercise and by stormwater after the exercise. In addition, use dechlorination blankets and/or dechlorination diffusers after/prior to spraying.
  - Ashes and partially burnt debris must be disposed of in dumpster.

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### MAINTENANCE/GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

#### Equipment Cleaning

- When cleaning trucks, fire apparatuses, hoses and other equipment with *detergents* always use indoor facilities or facilities that are connected to the sanitary sewer system.
- NEVER wash equipment outdoors and let wash water run into storm drains. Always use designated facilities. Many designated washing facilities will have an Oil Water Separator (OWS).
- If detergents must be used make sure they are in accordance with the designated wash facilities \*\*see attached wash rack guidance sheet for list of approved detergents\*\*
- Purging of firefighting water tanks require dechlorination diffusers to be used before water is released into the environment as stated under the Industrial Stormwater Permit Part III A.6



**\*\*IMPORTANT\*\*** Fort Belvoir has one location that is designated for vehicle wash downs. The Tactical Washrack is located by Building 1984. Unless special permission has been granted by Fort Belvoir's DPW/Env. Div. (Department of Public Works - Environmental Division) vehicle washing is to be carried out at this location **ONLY**.

Designated facilities are designed to trap sediment and pollutants before discharging into the sanitary sewer systems. Special considerations and restrictions are to be taken when using this wash rack (please see attached wash rack guidance sheet).

- Reduce the amount of heavy metals and paint chips removed from equipment during the washing process by reducing water pressure and choose the least abrasive cleaning techniques.
- Train all current and new employees who perform vehicle or equipment washing on this BMP annually or when hired.
- Ensure correct Safety Data Sheet is kept for other fire fighting chemicals on fire truck and ensure updated SDS are located on truck.

#### **SPILL RESPONSE PROCEDURES**

In the event of a spill or leak, follow the appropriate Spill Response Procedures posted at your facility or refer to the BMP Factsheet Overview.

- **Survey the incident** from a safe distance. Identify the source of release and the material being released.
- Call the Ft. Belvoir Fire Department if spills are *greater than 5 gallons OR greater than 5 square feet*. If ANY amount of leaked material has entered a storm drain or waterway call the Ft. Belvoir Fire Department at 703-781-1800 and DPW Environmental Division (Env. Div.) at 703-806-3694.
- Provide the Safety Data Sheet of the spilled material to the spill response personnel.
- Fill out Spill Incident Report in your SWPPP.
- **REPORT ALL SPILLS REGARDLESS OF SIZE TO DPW/ENV. DIV.**

#### **REPORT SPILLS TO DPW/ENV. DIV. BY:**

- E-mailing your Spill Incident Report to zachary.d.witman.civ@army.mil
- Calling 703-806-3694