

## What can you do to help protect the Spokane River?

- ◆ Store products and waste out of the weather, away from drains. Store them on a leak-proof surface.
- ◆ Do not put wash water or wastewater down the storm drain.
- ◆ Wash vehicles at a car wash.
- ◆ Create a spill cleanup kit that works for the chemicals you're using (such as solvents, acids and oils). Keep the kit near the area where the chemical products are used.
- ◆ Buy small quantities—only the amount you will use.
- ◆ Buy “green” products with the least toxic ingredients.

- ◆ Sweep outdoor areas clean of dirt and debris as needed.
- ◆ Dispose of wastes properly. Don't dump liquid chemicals into sinks or the garbage.
- ◆ Make sure wastewater treatment systems (grease traps, oil-water separators and catch basins) are regularly maintained.
- ◆ Replace galvanized roofs. Galvanized metal contains zinc, which is very toxic to fish.
- ◆ Put into practice the recommendations of the Urban Waters program inspector.



## Resources

### Spokane Regional Solid Waste System

- ◆ Hazardous Waste Coordinator . . . . . (509) 625-7898
- ◆ Recycling Hotline . . . . . (509) 625-6800

### Hazardous Waste Services Directory

- ◆ <http://apps.ecy.wa.gov/hwsd/default.htm>

### Free Technical Resources for Engineering Efficiency

- ◆ <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/hwtr/tree/index.html> or
- ◆ Contact Scott Mallery . . . . . (509) 329-3473

### Recycling information

- ◆ 1-800-RECYCLE or <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/recycle/>

## Questions?

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# Protecting Our Water:

## How small businesses can help clean up the Spokane River



**The Spokane River** is spectacular as it roars through downtown Spokane at high flow. It's a sight that attracts tens of thousands of visitors a year. But that same water also contains high levels of hazardous pollutants that may harm our health and could affect the aquifer that provides us with drinking water.

Through work done by the Department of Ecology and the Spokane Regional Health District, many of the large sources of pollution to the Spokane River are now being eliminated or controlled. But other, smaller sources of toxic chemicals have not yet been located. A new program aims to change that, beginning this year.

Everybody's goal is to protect the Spokane River and the Spokane Valley-Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer. Restoring the health of the river and keeping the aquifer clean go hand in hand with a vibrant community that's good for people and businesses too.

## Where does the pollution come from?



Pollution enters the Spokane River and aquifer through such sources as rain water that runs off roads, roofs, parking lots and other hard surfaces during a storm. It also comes from storm drains and sewers near the places in which you live and work when people flush soaps, chemicals and other pollutants down drains, either inside or outside.

## Why are we visiting you?

The state legislature in 2007 funded the Urban Waters Initiative program to look for sources of pollution to the Spokane River. These sources include water that feeds into the river from a large area, both above and below the ground. Hazardous substances such as PCBs, flame retardants, dioxins, furans and metals have been found at harmful levels in fish, water and river sediment. The Urban Waters program pays for specialists from the Department of Ecology and the Spokane Regional Health District to visit local businesses. We are making the visits to:

- ◆ Identify possible sources of pollution.
- ◆ Provide tips and resources that help to reduce the operating costs of your business.
- ◆ Discuss ways you can safely handle, reduce, reuse, recycle and dispose of hazardous materials.
- ◆ Help business owners understand the regulations and permits that are needed to safely handle hazardous chemicals.

## How could this benefit your business?

A cleaner river helps your business because it will:

- ◆ Reduce your liability.
- ◆ Decrease your operating costs.
- ◆ Improve your environmental image by using green and LEAN practices.
- ◆ Improve the safety of your employees.
- ◆ Give all of us a healthier environment.

## What can you expect during an inspection?

A visit from an Urban Waters program inspector does not mean that there is a violation or problem. Our purpose is to look at your operations and locate sources of possible pollution. We might take soil or water samples to find out whether pollution has occurred.

We will keep our visit as brief as possible and will pay particular attention to practices at your business that might pollute the Spokane River and aquifer when water runs off your property or gets into the sewer system. Such practices include the following:

- ◆ Management of wastewater and washwater
- ◆ Waste disposal
- ◆ Spill prevention
- ◆ Outdoor maintenance practices
- ◆ Outdoor storage of products and waste
- ◆ Fueling operations



## What happens after the inspection?

If we find a practice that needs improvement, we will work with you to help you properly manage pollutants. You may also receive a return visit from us to check on your progress and answer any additional questions you might have about what you can do to help protect our community's water from pollution.

