



NOTICE

Carpet Cleaning, Upholstery Cleaning, and Other Mobile Cleaning Services Operating within Greenville County

Greenville County is a designated **Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4)** authorized under a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit issued in accordance with the SC Pollution Control Act. As part of the permit requirements, Greenville County implemented a Storm Water Management Program which includes an Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE) process to detect and remove illicit discharges and improper disposal to the storm sewer system. Under the Permit, the county is also responsible for developing public education and outreach activities in the community regarding the impacts of storm water discharge on water bodies and what steps can be taken to reduce pollutants in storm water runoff.

Carpet cleaning solutions, detergents, solvents, chemical additives, de-foaming agents, as well as the actual pollutants and impurities extracted from dirty carpets and upholstery, all increase the **Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD)** of the wastewater being generated. **BOD** is a standard measurement of the overall strength of the wastewater pollution and indicates the degree that the natural oxygen supply will be depleted in the receiving public waters. The limited amount of dissolved oxygen in water is critical and must be maintained for fish and other aquatic life forms to exist. The mere labeling of cleaning products, detergents, defoaming agents or other materials as “non-toxic” or “biodegradable” does *not* indicate that the material or prepared cleaning solutions can be discharged directly to the environment without impact to the receiving waters. It simply means that these products, *at certain specified maximum concentrations*, are not toxic to naturally occurring micro-organisms, and the resulting wastewater will be amenable to treatment in a conventional biological waste treatment process. These chemicals, or the prepared solutions, are not allowed to be discharged directly to the environment without appropriate treatment.

Wastewater recovered from carpet cleaning activities must be properly discharged to an appropriate wastewater receptacle such as a mop sink, toilet, a Dump Station, a permitted Pump & Haul system or other approved fixture located on private property that is connected to a public sanitary sewer or to an approved wastewater disposal system. It is illegal to open or otherwise access a sanitary sewer manhole located on public sewer rights-of-way for the disposal of wastewater without proper authorization. Also, publicly-owned treatment works (POTW) typically require that wastewater from commercial carpet cleaning activities be filtered to remove fibers and grit, at a minimum, before final disposal into a public sewer system receptacle. It is recommended that business owners verify specific equipment requirements and pretreatment criteria with local sewer authorities in areas they service.

Federal, state and local laws and ordinances prohibit dumping wastewater or pollutants onto the ground, into the streets, or to storm water drainage systems that flow directly to streams, creeks, rivers, ponds and lakes. Business owners should adopt appropriate company policies, establish standard procedures and educate their employees regarding accepted Best Management Practices (BMPs) to eliminate illicit discharges to the storm sewer systems and surface waters in order to avoid fines, penalties and other enforcement actions. Intentional or careless release of wastewater to waters of the state is a violation of the SC Pollution Control Act and can result in fines up to \$25,000 per incident and/or imprisonment of up to two years. An unpermitted discharge of wastewater to the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) is also considered a violation of the Federal Clean Water Act and local Storm Water Management Ordinances. The Greenville County Revised Storm Water Management Ordinance No. 4281 authorizes the County to assess a civil penalty of not more than \$7,500 per violation against any person who has violated any provision of the **Ordinance** (www.greenvillecounty.org/land_development/pdf/Ordinance.PDF). The county also has the authority to charge any person violating any provision of the Ordinance with a misdemeanor punishable within the jurisdictional limits of Magistrates Court.

Associated educational materials on Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE) process will also be made available to the public through the Education and Outreach Program administered through the **Greenville County Soil and Water Conservation District** (www.greenvillecounty.org/land_development/Quality.asp). [Sept. 13, 2012]