

# Tips for Public Works Facilities

It is cheaper and easier to prevent pollution, than to clean it up. The EPA's New England Environmental Assistance Team has suggestions to prevent pollution.

## Materials Storage & Management

### Purchasing

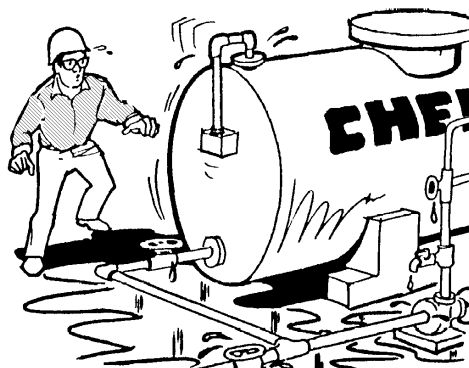
- Order products in amounts you will soon use. Don't keep a large inventory; expired products are costly to dispose of and may pose a hazard.
- Inspect products and materials for leaks or damage.
- Purchase multi-purpose products to reduce the number of hazardous chemicals in the facility.
- Ask suppliers for the least hazardous products suitable for the job. Review each Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) prior to purchase.

### Storage

- Organize and label oils, products, and hazardous materials, store similar items together.
- Create an inventory system for oils, products, and hazardous materials. Rotate the inventory.
- Keep unused products in their original containers.
- Inspect storage areas to identify places where spilled products may enter the environment, such as floor drains, doorways, loading docks, catch basins, dirt, or cracked floors. Avoid storing, dispensing or mixing products in these areas.

### Usage

- Use self-closing spigots and nozzles for dispensing fluids from bulk containers.
- Ask employees to return empty containers, such as spray cans, before using new supplies.
- Pour and mix products in a well-ventilated area, over a spill pallet.
- Use as few spray cans at a time of brake or carburetor cleaners, lubricants, etc., as feasible.



- Avoid collecting multiple, partly-used cans in various work areas.

## General Facility Conditions

### Yard

- Ensure that catch basins have oil/grit separators and holding tanks.
- Keep catch basin sumps empty and clean. Inspect every spring and after heavy rains.

### Building

- Contract with a fire extinguisher company to test and fill extinguishers once a year.
- Secure overhead items that could fall and cause injuries.
- Keep floors as dry and clean as possible to prevent falls, electrical hazards, and contamination.
- Use non-hazardous cleaning materials.
- Use magnetic covers or berms to insure that spills cannot go into floor drains.

Sources:  
*Links and Nodes*, Rhode Island Technology Transfer Center, Summer 2002, p. 4  
<http://www.epa.gov/region01/steward/necat/muni/index.html>