flowstobay.org
SAN MATEO COUNTYWIDE
WATER POLLUTION PREVENTION PROGRAM
Clean Water. Healthy Community.

STORMWATER QUALITY CONTROL REQUIREMENTS
INFORMATION FOR SINGLE-FAMILY HOME PROJECT APPLICANTS

What is Stormwater Pollution?

In natural landscapes, most of the rainwater soaks into the soil. However, in urban areas, **impervious or hard surfaces** such as roof tops on buildings, driveways, sidewalks, and streets prevent rainwater from soaking into the ground and cause **stormwater runoff**. As stormwater runoff flows over impervious surfaces, it can pick up pollutants such as litter, motor oil, metals, and pesticides, and carry them into storm drains. This polluted runoff flows directly into local lakes, creeks, San Francisco Bay and the Pacific Ocean, without any cleaning or filtering to remove pollutants.

Why are Stormwater Quality Controls Being Required for My Project?

Local agencies in urbanized portions of the Bay Area are responsible for controlling stormwater pollution by complying with the [Municipal Regional Stormwater Permit](#) (MRP), reissued by the Regional Water Quality Control Board in May 2022. Larger development projects have been required to implement stormwater quality controls for over a decade. A new requirement in the MRP now mandates stormwater quality controls for some large single-family homes.

Low Impact Development (LID) Measures reduce stormwater runoff and mimic a site's predevelopment hydrology. LID measures include infiltration, evapotranspiration, rainwater harvesting, and biotreatment.

How Do These Requirements Impact My Project?

Beginning July 1, 2023, single-family home projects that **create and/or replace 10,000 square feet or more of impervious surface** must meet stormwater quality requirements by including **site design measures, source control measures**, **low impact development (LID) treatment measures**, and **construction site best management practices**, as appropriate for the project. These practices, explained below, should be incorporated into the project design as early as possible. Runoff from portions of the public right of way, such as the street frontage, that are constructed or reconstructed as part of the project will also need to be treated using LID treatment measures.

Site Design Measures

Site design measures help to reduce stormwater flow and water quality impacts of the project by:

- Preserving existing vegetation;
- Reducing the amount of impervious surface using landscaping and/or pervious pavement;
- Directing flow from roof downspouts to landscaping instead of impervious surfaces.

Site design measures, such as pervious pavement, can reduce the need for treatment measures and/or reduce the amount of impervious surface requiring treatment to below regulatory thresholds.

Source Control Measures

Source controls prevent potential pollutant sources from contacting stormwater. Examples include:

- Storing household chemicals (e.g., paints, pesticides, fertilizers, and cleaning products) indoors
- Connecting swimming pools and spas to the sanitary sewer system

LID Stormwater Treatment Measures

LID measures are treatment systems designed to treat a specific amount of stormwater runoff from buildings, streets, and parking lots by filtration through a special soil media, infiltration into the ground, or storage for future use. This reduces the quantity of water and pollutants flowing into storm drains and local creeks. The site design and LID treatment measures described on the next page can be used to collect runoff from roofs, driveways, and other impervious surfaces to meet stormwater quality requirements.

Landscape Dispersion

Landscaped areas can be designed to collect stormwater runoff from building roofs and paved areas. Disconnect downspouts and direct water away from buildings with splash blocks.
For more design guidance, see the [Landscape Designs for Stormwater Management Fact Sheet](#).

Roof and driveway draining to landscaping

Bioretention Areas or Rain Gardens

Bioretention areas or rain gardens are shallow, depressed, landscaped areas that use a special soil mix to remove pollutants from stormwater runoff. For sizing information and other design guidance, see the [Rain Garden Fact Sheet](#).

Bioretention area (rain garden)

Rainwater Harvesting

Rain barrels or cisterns can be used to collect and store rainwater for use in landscape irrigation and toilet flushing. For guidance on the determining the storage capacity of the rain barrel or cistern, see the [Rain Barrels and Cisterns Fact Sheet](#).

Rain barrels

Pervious Concrete, Porous Asphalt, and Pervious Pavers

Pervious surfaces can be used in driveways, backyards, and walkways. Pervious surfaces include the following: pervious concrete or porous asphalt, grid pavers with gaps filled with gravel or turf, interlocking pavers made of pervious material, and solid interlocking pavers that have gaps between them. For design guidance, see the [Pervious Pavement Fact Sheet](#).

Driveway being constructed with pervious pavement

Construction Site Measures

Project sites are also required to use construction best management practices (BMPs), such as:

- Controlling soil erosion onsite and preventing sediment from being carried or tracked offsite;
- Covering construction materials and containing wastes such that they do not enter storm drains;
- Protecting storm drain inlets during construction using rubber mats, gravel bags, etc.

What is Required for My Project?

Check with your local Planning Department for information on which stormwater requirements apply and what information is required to be submitted with the project application. You may be required to submit a Stormwater Control Plan prior to project approval.

For More Information:

Visit the [Development Projects webpage](#) of the San Mateo Countywide Water Pollution Prevention Program website for technical guidance and documents, such as:

- The Stormwater Checklist for Small Projects
- The C.3 Regulated Projects Guide

flowstobay.org