

Employee Training: Part 7

Agricultural Water Quality: Outdoor Areas



Rooftops, Parking Areas and Grounds/Landscaping are all areas in a growing operation that can contribute significantly to water quality degradation. There are numerous BMP's that can aid in reducing the pollution problems from these areas:

- **Rooftop BMP's:**
 - Do not store any materials on rooftops that may contaminate stormwater as it falls onto those areas.
 - If you are storing equipment on rooftops, inspect it periodically for leaks.
 - Remove accumulated materials and bird droppings periodically, especially before the rainy season.
- **Parking area BMP's:**
 - Route downspouts away from parking and other hard surface areas, and into a pervious area to allow the water to soak into the ground.
 - Periodically clean parking areas, but be careful to protect storm drains. Dry cleaning preferred.

- Evaluate new parking areas for 100+ vehicles for best management practices, including routing of water.
- Inspect stored vehicles for leaks.
- Provide trash containers in parking areas.
- Avoid contact of stormwater and stored equipment.
- **Landscape BMP's:**
 - Prevent leaks, spills and chemical over-application on landscaped areas.
 - Use chemicals according to label directions, and dispose of properly.
 - Try to avoid chemical applications just before a rainfall.
 - Properly label and store landscape chemicals.
 - Use IPM whenever possible for landscape pest control.
 - Clean landscape areas and remove debris and litter.
 - Have a "spill kit" available and make sure the employees are trained in its use.
 - Report spills in outdoor areas promptly.
 - Stabilize exposed slopes to eliminate problems with erosion.
 - Clean sidewalks periodically, preferably with dry methods.

Take a look around: Check your outdoor areas carefully for any location that will flow into a stream, ditch or other portion of the stormdrain system. Once again, these are areas of a growing operation that are often overlooked since they are not necessarily related to production. It is most effective to review your outdoor areas just prior to the rainy season, as the rainwater will quickly carry the accumulated pollutants into the stormdrain system, causing water quality problems.