

# Dumpster Management

**A**lmost every business generates waste and temporarily stores it on-site. Many businesses have dumpsters, compactors, or refuse bins. These containers are typically kept behind buildings or in alleys, where they are often out of sight and out of mind.

Commercial refuse containers can be a major source of stormwater pollution if they are not properly operated and maintained. Open dumpsters can collect rain water which mixes with wastes. The polluted water inevitably spills or leaks when the container is emptied. Rain can wash leaking materials, spills, and trash from dumpsters and compactors into storm drains. Wash water runoff from cleaning refuse receptacles and loading docks is another source of stormwater pollution. Runoff can contain grease, litter, bacteria, pathogens, and chemicals. Properly maintaining dumpsters and keeping loading docks clean can also help prevent unsightly conditions, unpleasant odors and attraction of rodents and other pests.

## TO PREVENT WATER POLLUTION

- Inspect dumpsters and compactors regularly for leaks (at least once a month).
- Inspect dumpster and compactor area regularly for litter or stains (at least once a week).
- Replace leaking dumpsters, waste containers, and compactors as soon as possible (call your waste management contractor or dumping leasing company for a replacement). Consider getting leak proof dumpsters.
- Control litter by making sure waste is contained in dumpsters and compactors. Sweep loading dock area regularly.
- Avoid or minimize placing liquid waste, grease, or leaky garbage bags into dumpsters. Place liquid waste in appropriate containers for disposal.
- Keep dumpster lids tightly closed to keep out rainwater and prevent leakage. Replace damaged or missing lids.
- Avoid hosing out the dumpster interior. Apply absorbent materials (kitty litter) over any liquids spilled in the dumpster.
- Do not place hazardous waste in a dumpster. Lock the dumpster or enclosure to prevent illegal disposal of hazardous materials.



## TROUBLED WATERS

Think before you wash anything down a storm drain. That water ends up in our local streams and the Potomac River, our source of drinking water.



*Keep dumpsters and compactors in a covered area.*



*Sweep loading dock area regularly.*

- Post signs that indicate what materials can be placed in the container. Check regularly for non-accepted materials.
- Keep dumpsters and compactors in a covered area.
- Drain the area around the dumpster to the sanitary sewer system (*Important note: drains cannot be open to the sky*). Direct wash water to a drain connected to the sanitary sewer.
- Install berms or curbs around dumpsters and loading docks to contain leaks, spills, and trash. Collect any wash water with a wet vacuum system.
- Install a water quality management device to treat runoff from the dumpster area.

Your business may be able to save money by recycling, which reduces trash disposal costs. County Code requires Arlington businesses to establish and maintain a recycling program to recycle the two materials generated annually in the greatest quantities. For more information on how to improve or expand your recycling program, call the County's Solid Waste Bureau at 703-228-6570.



*Post signs that indicate what materials can be placed in the container.*



*Inspect dumpster area regularly for litter or leaks.*



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