



# Stormwater Quality Control Requirements

## Information for Developers, Builders and Project Applicants

Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program

June 2016

### Why Are New Requirements Needed?

Stormwater runoff from urbanized areas remains the largest source of pollution to San Francisco Bay. Local agencies in urbanized portions of the Bay Area are responsible for controlling stormwater pollution by complying with the revised Municipal Regional Stormwater Permit, adopted by the Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) in November 2015.

### Overview of Stormwater Requirements

During development review, local agencies require projects to include stormwater controls, including site design measures, source controls, treatment measures, low impact development measures, hydro-modification management measures, and construction site practices, as appropriate for the project. These features should be incorporated into the project design as early as possible. This fact sheet provides an overview of the current requirements.

### Site Design for Water Quality

Site design measures to reduce water quality impacts include:

- Preserve existing vegetation;
- Reduce impervious surfaces;
- Direct runoff from impervious surfaces to vegetated areas;
- Use pervious pavement;
- Install vegetated roof systems (green roof).

### Source Controls

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

- Roofed trash enclosures.
- Covered outdoor materials handling and storage areas.
- Sanitary sewer drains for vehicle wash areas (with sewer agency approval).
- Storm drain labeling

Contact your local agency for appropriate source control measures (see contact information on page 2).

### Stormwater Treatment

Stormwater treatment measures are systems designed to remove pollutants from stormwater before it reaches the storm drain system, and ultimately San Francisco Bay. Examples of allowable treatment measures for most projects include:

- Bioretention areas;
- Flow-through planters;
- Tree wells;
- Infiltration trenches or subsurface systems;
- Rainwater harvesting systems.



Since 2006, projects that create and/or replace 10,000 square feet or more of impervious surface have been required to have properly-sized, permanent stormwater treatment measures.

Beginning December 1, 2011, the threshold for requiring stormwater treatment decreased from 10,000 to 5,000 square feet, or more, of impervious surface for the following project categories:

- Uncovered parking areas (stand-alone or part of another use, including the top level of a parking structure);
- Restaurants;
- Auto service facilities; and
- Retail gasoline outlets.

### Low Impact Development

The goal of low impact development (LID) is to reduce stormwater runoff and mimic the site's predevelopment hydrology. This is achieved by minimizing disturbed areas and impervious cover and then infiltrating, storing, evaporating stormwater into the air or through plant transpiration, or biotreating stormwater runoff close to its source, or onsite.

LID reduces water quality impacts by preserving and re-creating natural landscape features, minimizing imperviousness, and using stormwater as a resource. This may be accomplished by installing rain barrels or cisterns, green roofs, permeable pavement, or stormwater

treatment measures designed to infiltrate or detain stormwater runoff, so that all of the rainwater runoff required to be treated per the stormwater permit soaks into the ground, is stored for irrigation or in-building use, evaporates, or is taken up by plants. Landscape-based “biotreatment,” such as a bioretention area or flow-through planter with an underdrain system that flows to the storm drain, is also allowed.



*A bioretention area infiltrates and treats runoff from parking areas*

The use of vault-based treatment systems is only allowed at projects that meet the Special Projects criteria described in Appendix J of SCVURPPP’s C.3 Stormwater Handbook.

### **Hydromodification Management (HM)**

When land is covered with buildings and pavement, runoff enters creeks at higher rates and volumes, resulting in channel erosion, flooding and habitat loss. These changes in runoff characteristics are known as hydromodification. Hydromodification management (HM) measures are detention and/or infiltration facilities that are constructed with special discharge structures to match pre-project runoff patterns. HM requirements

are different from flood control requirements.

If a project creates and/or replaces one acre or more of impervious surface, increases impervious surface area over the pre-project condition, AND is located in a susceptible area, HM requirements will apply. You can view a map of susceptible areas and a fact sheet on HM requirements on the SCVURPPP Low Impact Development webpage.

### **Maintaining Treatment and HM Measures**

Stormwater treatment measures and HM measures need ongoing maintenance to keep working properly. Applicants must prepare a maintenance plan and sign, with the applicable local agency, a maintenance agreement that designates responsibility to the property owner.

### **Construction Site Controls**

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

- Implement sediment and erosion control plans.
- Minimize exposed soil by stabilizing slopes.
- Manage construction materials and wastes onsite such that they do not enter storm drains.
- Protect storm drain inlets.

Projects disturbing one acre or more must comply with the Statewide Construction General Permit. For more information, visit the State Water Resources Control Board website: [http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/stormwater/construction.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/stormwater/construction.shtml).

### **What is Required for My Project?**

Check with the 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.

### **Contact Information**

- SCVURPPP:  
(408) 720-8811,  
[www.scvurppp.org](http://www.scvurppp.org)
- For the SCVURPPP C.3 Stormwater Handbook and other guidance materials, go to [www.scvurppp.org](http://www.scvurppp.org) and click on “Quick Links” and “Low Impact Development”
- San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board: (510) 622-2300



*A green roof filters stormwater and provides endangered species habitat in San Jose*