



REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLANT

OPERATED BY THE CITY OF PALO ALTO FOR THE EAST
PALO ALTO SANITARY DISTRICT, LOS ALTOS, LOS ALTOS
HILLS, STANFORD, MOUNTAIN VIEW, AND PALO ALTO

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ART STUDIOS SANITARY SEWER DISCHARGE

Making art can produce liquid and solid waste that are prohibited by your City's Sewer Use Ordinance from being poured down a sink or drain to the sanitary sewer. Chemicals and metals in wastewater end up at the Palo Alto Regional Water Quality Control Plant (RWQCP) and ultimately in the Bay. To reduce these pollutants, art studio facilities and artists should follow the Best Management Practices (BMPs) outlined in this factsheet. Failure to comply with the Sewer Use Ordinance is subject to enforcement and may result in fines.

Avoid Disposing Wastes Down the Drain

- ☐ Hazardous waste must not be poured down a sink or drain to the sanitary sewer. This includes heavy metals, chlorinated and organic solvents, alcohols, explosive liquids, and caustic or corrosive cleaning solutions (California Code of Regulations Title 22 and the CFR Title 40 Part 261).
- ☐ Materials that may clog a sewer pipe must not be disposed of into the sanitary sewer. This includes solid materials or materials expected to gel or solidify as they cool or harden (e.g., paint).
- ☐ Other substances may be prohibited due to properties such as chemical ingredients, heavy metals (e.g., silver, copper), pH, temperature, explosivity, or radioactivity. These are specified in your City's Sewer Use Ordinance.
- ☐ Questions? Please email Pretreatment@PaloAlto.gov

Chemical and Hazardous Waste Storage

- ☐ Properly label and store all chemicals in chemical safety cabinets with latched doors.
- ☐ Keep hazardous waste in non-corrosive containers, in an area separate from other chemical storage, and labeled in accordance with state and federal laws until they can be properly disposed of.
- ☐ Do not store chemicals or wastes above sinks or other drains.
- ☐ Do not store chemicals or waste in consumer commodity containers such as milk containers or soda bottles.
- ☐ Segregate incompatible chemicals to prevent mixing in case of a spill.
- ☐ Store chemicals in a secondary drip and spill containment vessel or area (e.g., a tray or bermed area). This should be impervious to the liquid(s) being contained and large enough to hold at least 110% of the capacity of the primary container, or if there are multiple primary containers then 150% of the largest primary container. Secondary containment vessels (or areas) shall not drain to the sanitary sewer or storm drain system. Local fire codes may require a permit and/or Hazardous Materials Management Plan (HMMP) to document the use and storage locations of hazardous materials.

Spill Clean Up

- ☐ Do not use mop water to clean up spills. Doing so makes the floor mop water hazardous, and it can no longer be disposed of down a sink or toilet drain.
- ☐ Prior to mopping, use dry clean-up methods: (1) clean up spills with rags, kitty litter, or other absorbent materials, (2) sweep up all absorbent material, and (3) manage the rags and absorbent as either solid waste or hazardous waste, per CA Waste Codes. Do not wash or reuse the rags.
- ☐ Following the 3-step dry clean-up methods, any subsequent mop water may be discharged to the sanitary sewer via a toilet or sink.
- ☐ Never use a wet vac to clean a solvent spill because vapors can explode in the vacuum.
- ☐ Keep spill prevention, clean-up equipment, and absorbent materials in stock and readily available.

Disposing of Hazardous Waste

- ☐ Small businesses and non-profit organizations located in Palo Alto, East Palo Alto, Mountain View, Stanford, Los Altos, or Los Altos Hills that generate 220 pounds or less of hazardous waste per month may participate in Palo Alto's Very Small Quantity Generator Program. A registration and disposal fee are required based on the type and quantity of waste being disposed of. To register for an appointment, call the Palo Alto's hazardous waste contractor (Clean Harbors) at **(800) 433-5060** or send an email request to VSQG@cleanharbors.com. More information is available at www.paloalto.gov/hazwaste
- ☐ Alternatively, contract with a certified hazardous waste management hauler to collect and dispose of hazardous waste.
- ☐ Retain all disposal and hauling records for a minimum of 3 years.

Educate Staff and Customers

- ☐ Post signs or diagrams at work stations, sinks and drains to remind users that disposal of specific substances to the sewer is prohibited (e.g., "Do Not Dump Cement, Clay, Glazes, Chemicals, or Hazardous Materials Down the Drain").
- ☐ Ensure that all users have been informed of chemical handling, spill response, and disposal protocols.
- ☐ For all on-site chemicals, have copies of Safety Data Sheets (SDS) accessible to all users.



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Each art form has additional BMPs specific to it.

Ceramics and Sculpture

- ☐ Ceramics and sculpture waste include glazes, dry ceramic material, clay, hot wax, acid, and oils.
- ☐ Glazes and stains commonly include toxic metals. Avoid products containing arsenic, barium, cadmium, or selenium; instead seek out less-toxic metals such as iron, calcium, sodium, and potassium.
- ☐ Install and maintain a solids interceptor, designed to mount under the sink, to avoid discharged solids from clogging pipes.
- ☐ Instruct users not to pour clay particles, wet cement, or hot wax down the drain. These materials become solids when they eventually harden. Then they clog sewer pipes and cause sewage backups, either in your studio or in the community. Set these items aside to harden and dispose of as solid waste instead of putting them in the drain.
- ☐ Ceramic waste free from metal glaze may be disposed of in the trash. Pottery with lead, cadmium, or barium glaze must be collected and disposed of as hazardous waste.
- ☐ Recycle glazes by collecting spills and debris and adjusting with colorants as needed. Mix with water and test fire.

Painting and Wood Finishing

- ☐ Painting and wood finishing waste includes flammable solvents, such as thinners and fixatives, toxic metal-pigment-containing paint, contaminated rags/towels, and aerosol cans.
- ☐ Unwanted or leftover containers of paints, solvents, adhesives, aerosols, and rags should be disposed of as hazardous waste.
- ☐ Wipe all tools and brushes with a paper towel or disposable rag before cleaning with solvent or water. Dispose of paper towel/rag used to clean oil-based paint in a flame-resistant waste can. Dispose of paper towel/rag used to clean water-based paint in municipal solid waste bin.
- ☐ When cleaning paintbrushes with paint thinner, first wipe excess paint from the brush. Then soak the brush vertically in a covered container. Once the pigments settle, decant the good thinner into a second container for reuse. Pour the pigment sludge into a labeled hazardous waste container and dispose of as hazardous waste.
- ☐ Small amounts of cleaning waste from brushes, rollers, buckets, and tools that are contaminated with latex or water-based paints may be poured into sanitary sewer drains provided that no prohibited additives (such as fungicides containing tributyltin compounds) were added to the paint.

Photography and Development

- ☐ Used toner, fixer, bleach-fix, and stabilizer are hazardous due to silver, gold, and selenium ingredients. Photo developer is generally not considered hazardous.
- ☐ Set aside used toner as hazardous waste.
- ☐ For silver-containing liquid (fixer, bleach-fix, or stabilizer), either dispose of as hazardous waste or purchase a silver recovery system to remove the silver from the liquid prior to discharge to the sanitary sewer.
- ☐ If using a silver recovery system, determine optimum times for cartridge replacements based on flow, square footage of film, paper processed, and/or time-in-service. Service the system at recommended intervals. Retain service records for a minimum of 3 years.

Printmaking and Cyanotypes

- ☐ Printmaking waste includes metal-containing inks, toxic cyanide-containing chemicals, flammable solvents, and solvent-soaked rags and towels.
- ☐ Waste inks, degreasers, solvents, and rinse water should be collected and set aside in labeled containers and disposed of as hazardous waste.
- ☐ Solvent-soaked towels should be placed in labeled, lidded, steel waste containers designed for flammable materials and disposed of as hazardous waste.

Metalworking and Jewelry-Making

- ☐ Specific metalworking processes (casting, stripping, cleaning, and plating) produce hazardous wastes including corrosive degreasers, etchants, patinas, flammable solvents, toxic sealants, and cyanide electroplating compounds.
- ☐ All wastewater from metalworking and jewelry-making should be stored as hazardous waste and may be subject to federal Pretreatment regulations. Contact the RWQCP at Pretreatment@PaloAlto.gov to see if an Industrial Waste Discharge Permit is required.