

# DISPOSAL OF CARPET CLEANING WASTEWATER

Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District  
Wastewater Source Control Section (WSCS)

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## Background

Carpet cleaning wastewater cannot be discharged into a storm drain, street, gutter, parking lot, or other outside area where it could run into the storm drain system. Detergents and pollutants contained in carpet cleaning wastewater can be harmful to aquatic life in the creeks where the storm drains lead to.

Following a few simple rules, carpet cleaners can discharge their wastewater into the sanitary sewer system.

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## The Sanitary Sewer System

The sanitary sewer system carries domestic, commercial, and industrial wastewater (sewage) to the treatment plant. Sinks, showers, bathtubs, toilets, *certain* floor drains, and other fixtures located *inside* a building are normally connected to the sanitary sewer system.

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## Sewer Use Questionnaire

WSCS requires that every business discharging non-domestic wastewater to the sanitary sewer system complete and submit an up-to-date Sewer Use Questionnaire (SUQ) or obtain a Wastewater Discharge Permit. At this time, steam or detergent-based carpet cleaning operations do not require a Wastewater Discharge Permit. There are currently no fees associated with submitting the SUQ.

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## Prohibited Carpet Cleaning Discharges

You are prohibited from discharging any waste or wastewater which:

- Has a pH lower than 5.0 or greater than or equal to 12.5;
  - Contains solid or viscous substances in amounts which obstruct flow in the sewer system;
  - Is flammable; or
  - Is a hazardous waste as defined by the State of California.
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## Discharge Options

There are three options for the proper disposal of carpet cleaning wastewater to the sanitary sewer. These options are as follows:

- Discharge collected wastewater to your client's sanitary sewer;
- Discharge collected wastewater to the sanitary sewer at your

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### Discharge Options (continued)

- place of business; or
- Discharge collected wastewater to a county septage site: WSCS charges a fee for discharging to septage stations. **NOTE**: It is illegal to discharge hauled wastewater into a public sewer system at an unauthorized location.

### Wastewater Tips

Here are a few “dos and don’ts” for disposing of carpet cleaning wastewater.

Do:

- Plan Ahead – figure out where you will be discharging wastewater before starting a job.
- Filter – to prevent clogging, filter wastewater before discharging to the sewer system.
- Use Non-Toxic Cleaners – avoid using solvent-based cleaners and spotting agents, especially chlorinated solvent cleaners.
- Ask for Help – if you have any questions, feel free to give WSCS a call.

Don’t:

- Discharge Wastewater at Other Businesses – do not dispose of carpet cleaning wastewater at a carwash or other business without the owner’s consent.
- Discharge to a Storm Drain – in no instance should wastewater from any operation be discharged into a storm drain or gutter. Storm drains are not connected to the treatment plant and flow directly to nearby creeks and rivers.

### For More Information

For further information about sewer requirements, call WSCS at (916) 875-6470.

Note – this fact sheet was developed for guidance purposes only and does not provide a comprehensive or detailed description of all the pertinent laws, rules, and regulations that may apply to wastewater disposal.