



# City of East Grand Forks

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Public Works Department · 1001 2nd St NE · East Grand Forks, MN 56721

## **STORMWATER BMPs – FIREFIGHTING, FIRE TRAINING & SUPPRESSION SYSTEM TESTING**

### AFFECTED FACILITIES

These Best Management Practices (BMPs) apply when municipal employees or fire personnel discharge water from fire hydrants, use fire suppressant chemicals to fight a fire, conduct training activities, and conduct fire suppression system tests.

### BACKGROUND

The wastewater from firefighting and system testing can contain a variety of contaminants. These contaminants can flow into surface waters if wastewater is allowed to enter storm drains or ditches. The municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) permit only allows for the discharge from emergency firefighting activities or discharges meeting the conditions and requirements of Stormwater BMP-Potable Water Line Discharges.

### BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

#### Post-Emergency Firefighting Activities

These BMPs only apply after the fire is under control and personnel are available to conduct these activities:

- If possible, use covers, wattles, rock socks, berms, booms, sand bag dams or plastic sheeting to prevent fire-fighting flows from reaching storm drains or surface waters.
- Never flush any materials into storm drains. Even chlorinated water, dirt and sediment are considered to be stormwater pollutants.
- Do not dump hazmat decontamination water into street, parking lots or storm drains.

#### Fire Training Activities

- Be aware of storm drains during fire training activities. Protect storm drains so that nothing but potable water enters them.
- During fire extinguisher training, spray extinguishers only in areas where the foam can be collected. Sweep up any spilled foam and dispose of properly. Do not hose down waste extinguisher materials to the storm drain.
- When performing engine pump tests or hydrant tests, direct water flows to landscaped areas, detention areas, and/or implement BMPs to prevent discharge to storm drains or surface waters.

- Ensure that discharges from fire training activities are discharged to the sanitary sewer system or meet any local and state guidelines for stormwater discharges.

### Fire Suppression (Sprinkler) System Testing

- Discharges from chemical suppression systems must be disposed of properly either in the sanitary sewer or other disposal methods and must not be allowed to flow outside to paved surfaces that may lead to storm drains.
- Discharges from underground flush tests, fire pump tests, and hydrant flushing should follow these guidelines:
  - ✓ No chemicals are added.
  - ✓ Discharge water has not been used for another process (washing, heat exchange, manufacturing and hydrostatic testing of pipelines or not associated with treated water distribution systems).
  - ✓ Discharge shall not cause erosion.
  - ✓ Discharge shall not contain solid materials.
  - ✓ Discharge shall comply with lawful requirements of applicable local agencies regarding discharges to storm sewer systems.
  - ✓ Discharge must not contain residual chlorine at the point where it discharges to any surface water.
  - ✓ Water should not cause toxicity to vegetation.
  - ✓ Promote infiltration to the extent possible.

### General Best Management Practices

- The discharge of cleaning materials or chemicals, including dyes, is strictly prohibited.
- The water shall not be used in any additional process.
- The discharge shall not cause erosion of a land surface or pollution of the receiving water including visible erosion such as forming rills or gullies on the land surface.
- The discharge shall not contain solid materials in concentrations that can settle to form bottom deposits detrimental to the beneficial uses of the state waters or form floating debris, scum, or other surface materials sufficient to harm existing beneficial uses.
- All discharges must comply with the lawful requirements of federal agencies, municipalities, counties, drainage districts, ditch owners, and other local agencies regarding any discharges to storm drain systems, conveyances, ditches or other water courses under their jurisdiction. This guidance in no way reduces the existing authority of the owner of a storm sewer, ditch owner, or other local agency, from prohibiting or placing additional conditions on the discharge.
- Removal of any residual chlorine must be done for any direct discharge to state surface waters or for any discharge to a storm sewer or conveyance where the chlorine will not dissipate prior to reaching state surface waters. Dechlorination, if necessary, may be achieved by allowing water to stand uncovered until no chlorine is detected.
- The use of chemicals to remove chlorine is allowed and the proper use of chemicals as part of the operation of a dechlorinator is therefore allowed for. The operator must ensure proper quantities

and rates are used based on the concentration of chlorine, that adequate mixing occurs, and that enough time is allowed prior to flows reaching a surface water for the dechlorination chemicals to react with the chlorine in the water.

- For discharge to the ground, the water should not cause any toxicity to vegetation.
  - ✓ When discharging to ground, allow the water to drain slowly so that it soaks into the ground as much as possible.
  - ✓ The discharge should be conducted to minimize the potential to pick up additional suspended solids from the fire suppression system or as the water flows across surfaces such as pavement or vegetation.
  - ✓ When possible, check dams, filter bags, and inlet protection or a combination of practices, should be used to remove suspended solids or other debris.

## NEW CONSTRUCTION OR RENOVATION REQUIREMENTS

- Sanitary sewer connections for discharges from training facilities.

## REQUIRED TRAINING

Train all current employees who perform firefighting, fire training & suppression system testing on these BMPs, on the Spill Clean-up BMP, the Potable Water Line Discharges BMP and the importance of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) annually.

Train all new hires and job transferees who will perform firefighting, fire training & suppression system testing on these BMPs, on the Spill Clean-up BMP, the Potable Water Line Discharges BMP and the importance of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) before they are assigned to their new duties.

All contracts must stipulate that contracted employees are trained in these BMPs.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Household Hazardous Waste can be disposed of at:

**Polk County Environmental Services Transfer Station**  
320 Ingersoll Ave  
Crookston, MN 56716  
Monday - 7:00am to 7:00pm  
Tuesday through Friday - 7:00am to 5:30pm

Used motor oil and other waste automotive fluids can be disposed of at:

**Public Works Department**  
1001 Second St. N.E.  
East Grand Forks, MN 56721  
(218) 773-1313

To report an Illicit Discharge, clogged sewer or for answers to questions regarding these stormwater BMPs please contact:

**Public Works Stormwater/Wastewater Department**  
1001 Second St. N.E.  
East Grand Forks, MN 56721  
(218) 773-1313