

# Understanding Stormwater Permitting

in the City of Spokane

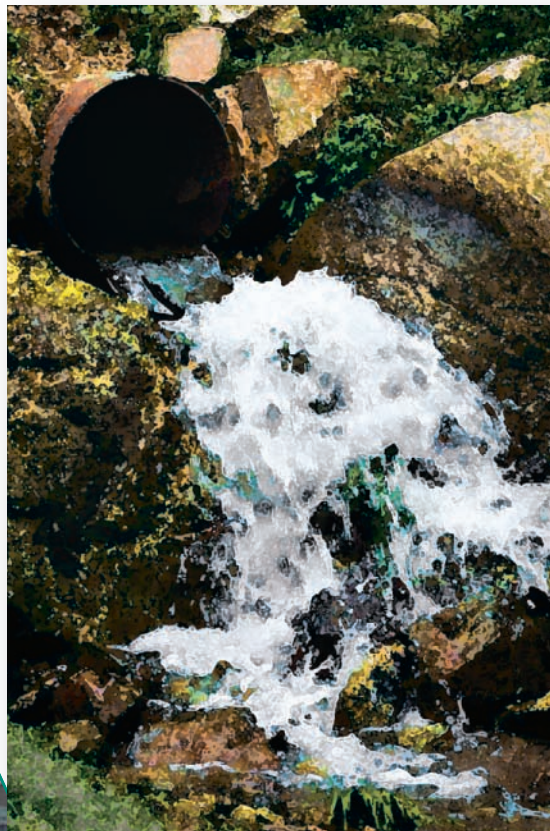


# Your Guide to Stormwater Management

Thank you for investing in Spokane. A successful project makes our City stronger and more diverse. This guide introduces you to stormwater management needs and will assist you in the development and permitting of your project.

Balancing development and environmental stewardship can be challenging to all, especially with new construction and stormwater management techniques. Stormwater runoff is one of the most significant sources of water pollution throughout the country, requiring billions of dollars in investment.

Locally, stormwater from rain and snowmelt sends dirt, debris, and contaminants from our streets, parking lots and other cityscapes directly into the Spokane River. To maintain our environmental needs for drinking water, fish, and habitat, millions of dollars is being invested in stormwater management.



Making this investment wisely, however, also means assuring development is strong, remains economically vibrant, and is welcome. Toward this end, the City of Spokane has dedicated staff whose job it is to help you navigate the permit process. Together, we want your project to succeed as quickly as possible.

This publication and web site materials were jointly developed by the City of Spokane, Spokane Riverkeeper, Gonzaga Environmental Law Clinic, and the Spokane River Forum.

Visit <http://www.spokaneriver.net/spokanestormwater> to access materials and web links referred to in this publication.

# Stormwater in Spokane

Whether it's rain or melting snow, water has to go somewhere. In urban areas like Spokane, safely directing stormwater from streets, parking lots, driveways and other hard (impervious) surfaces is our main concern. These impervious surfaces prevent stormwater from naturally soaking into the ground.

If not directed properly, stormwater can foul the environment and put plants, fish, animals, and people at risk. Why? Because flowing water picks up contaminants, nutrients, dirt, and bacteria before being deposited into the river or aquifer. This can put our drinking water, fish, and habitat at risk. Examples include motor oil from leaky engines, fertilizer from lawns, dirt from erosion, nutrients from pet waste and trash.

Spokane is not alone in needing to manage stormwater. Stormwater runoff is one of the most significant sources of water pollution in the country. In Seattle, for instance, an estimated 75 percent of the toxic chemicals getting to the Puget Sound are carried by stormwater.

Approximately one third of Spokane's stormwater goes directly into dedicated stormwater drains, called the municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4). The majority of this stormwater flows directly to the Spokane River and Latah Creek via one of 130 storm drain outfalls with only partial treatment.

Another one third of Spokane's stormwater goes directly into sewer drains, called combined sewer overflows (CSOs). These sewer lines flow to the city's wastewater treatment plant. Here, the stormwater is treated and then released into the river. When there is more flow than can be treated at the plant, Spokane's CSO system redirects the stormwater directly to the Spokane River via approximately 20 overflow outfalls.

The final third of Spokane's stormwater does not go into the city's MS4 or CSO systems. Here, grassy swales, drywells, evaporation ponds, and other facilities allow stormwater to soak into the ground or evaporate instead of being piped to the river or treatment plant.

Particularly for new construction, Spokane is encouraging low impact development (LID) practices wherever possible and practical as a way to naturally allow rain and snowmelt to soak directly into the ground. LID strives to mimic pre-disturbance hydrologic processes through site conservation and managing stormwater as close to where it falls as possible. Porous pavement, landscape planters and storm gardens are common examples of LID solutions. For more details, visit the City of Spokane's LID web site: <http://www.spokanewastewater.org/LID.aspx>.

## When do I need to address stormwater needs?

A **Stormwater/Drainage Report** and associated **Stormwater Plan** are part of several requirements needed to obtain a Commercial Building Permit (CBP) within the City of Spokane.

Any new construction that adds or replaces any impervious surface, including building an addition or requesting a change in use, requires you to complete this section of the CBP. These are called land disturbing activities as they result in changes to existing soil cover (vegetative or non-vegetative) or site topography. Examples include demolition, construction, clearing, and grading. These are common when constructing new buildings, additions to buildings, or creating/changing parking and loading areas. Here, the city asks that you meet the **Basic Requirements of the Spokane Regional Stormwater Manual (SRSM)**. You can download the **SRSM** at [http://www.spokanecounty.org/data/engineers/srsm\\_apr08final/SRSM\\_April2008Final.pdf](http://www.spokanecounty.org/data/engineers/srsm_apr08final/SRSM_April2008Final.pdf)

If new construction results in land-disturbing activities of five thousand square feet or greater, then an **Erosion and Sedimentation Control (ESC) Plan** is also required. The City's Engineering Services Department may also identify a project as a "special site" and request an **ESC Plan** even if it's under the five thousand square foot threshold. For example, sites with slopes, highly erosive soils, or a riparian buffer adjacent to water bodies

or wetlands may require an **ESC Plan**.

Whether or not an **ESC Plan** is required, all land-disturbing activities of any size must comply with erosion and



sediment control requirements in the **SRSM**.

The submittals, and possible technical expertise required, can vary dramatically based on the type of project being proposed. The City strongly recommends a pre-development conference to help identify what's needed to meet these requirements.

For more details and contact information, see the City of Spokane Commercial Permit Process at <http://www.buildingspokane.org/commercial-permit-process>.

For in-person assistance and to submit your application materials, visit the Development Services Center on the third floor of City Hall, 808 West Spokane Falls Boulevard, or call 625-6300.

## When do exemptions or waivers apply?

You may be exempt if your project is to install signs with incidental ground disturbing activity, planting a tree or other vegetation with hand held tools, or relates to operation, maintenance or repair of existing facilities. Also, there are exemptions for commercial agriculture, forest practices, certain surveying activities, and agencies responding to emergency actions.

The City's Engineering Services Department may grant a design deviation or waiver under certain circumstances. This can be reviewed at the pre-development conference.



# Do I Need a Stormwater Report?

Does your project add or replace any impervious surface?

NO

Your project is likely exempt from City and State stormwater permit requirements.

YES

Is there an exemption that applies?

YES

Confirm your exemption applies at pre-development conference.

NO

Does the project disturb 5,000 sq ft of area or more, or has the site been identified as "special site"?

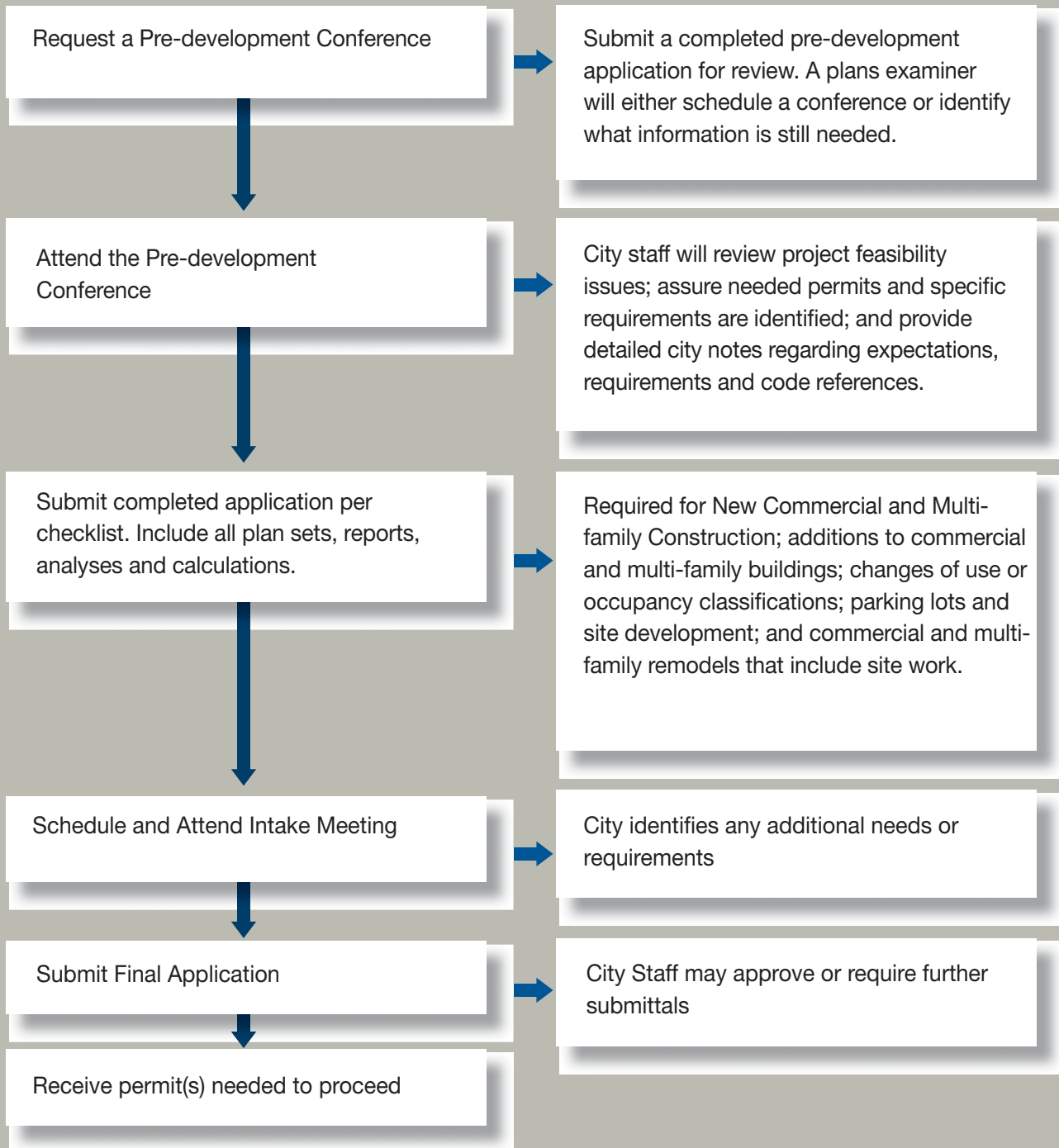
NO

A **Stormwater Report** is required. An **ESC Plan** submittal is not required, but **Basic Requirements** of the **SRSM** still apply.

YES

An **ESC Plan** must be submitted along with the **Stormwater Plan**.

## Recommended Process to Obtain a Commercial Permit Application, Including Meeting Stormwater Provisions



## What are the owner's on-going responsibilities?

The City is responsible for the stormwater infrastructure located within the public road right of way. The City is also responsible for structures located within border easements that serve public runoff. If a separate agreement exists that places the responsibility elsewhere, the owner and/or city will identify and address special circumstances during the permit process.

Up to the point of connection to the City's infrastructure, the property owner is responsible for the perpetual maintenance of all aspects of the permitted stormwater system. The property owner may also be responsible for maintaining landscaping within the public right of way and border easements that accommodate public runoff. In cases where multiple parties are sharing maintenance responsibilities, for example a homeowner association, these responsibilities will be detailed as part of permitting the full project.

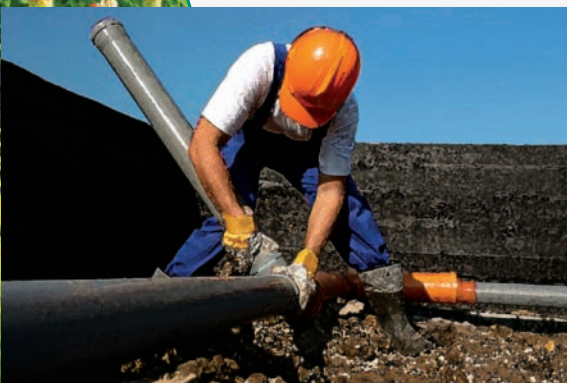
The permit process includes the development of an operations and maintenance manual to detail on-going and required tasks.

## What if I don't comply?


A project cannot move forward to construction if the required **Stormwater Plan** is not provided to the City and adequate stormwater facilities have not been designed. If the city finds that constructed stormwater facilities are not being maintained and operated properly, then penalties may be imposed. A person, project or business found to be in violation of the City's stormwater facility standards could be subject to a minimum fine of \$250 per day.

## What are the State's permit requirements?

In addition to Spokane's stormwater requirements, a project may require up to two permits from the Washington Department of Ecology: A **Construction Stormwater General Permit** and/or an **Industrial Stormwater General Permit**. The purpose of the **Construction Stormwater General Permit** is to reduce or eliminate stormwater pollution and other impacts to surface water from construction sites. The **Industrial Stormwater General Permit** is required







for certain industrial activities that cause stormwater runoff which could adversely impact the surface waters of the State. The process for receiving and obtaining a state permit is separate and distinct from what the City requires and is described below.

Often, however, you will find that the requirements, designs and facilities are applicable to both State and City permit requirements. Although not required, it is recommended that you go through applicable City and State permit processes at the same time. If your project requires one or both State permits and you do not obtain these permits from the Department of Ecology, you could face fines from \$500 to \$10,000 per day. Penalties are determined by the amount of harm your project causes to the environment.

The Department of Ecology requires a **Construction Stormwater General Permit** when:

- construction activities disturb one or more acres of land resulting in stormwater discharges into state surface waters, or;
- construction activities are part of a larger common plan of development or sale that will ultimately disturb one or more acres and the site discharges stormwater into state surface waters.

Examples include clearing, grading, excavating and demolition. Ecology has a very helpful guide, called **How to Meet Ecology's Construction Stormwater General Permit Requirements**, to assist you. Go to <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/publications/9937.pdf> to access this guide.

Ecology requires an **Industrial Stormwater General Permit** when particular activities discharge stormwater into a surface water body either directly or via a storm sewer system. Spokane Riverkeeper's, "How to Meet Ecology's Industrial Stormwater General Permit Requirements," identifies requirements and resources to complete this permit. Go to <http://www.spokaneriver.net/spokanestormwater> to access this guide.

The **Underground Injection Control (UIC) Program** regulates discharges of stormwater into the subsurface in order to protect groundwater quality. Examples of **UICs** include drywells, infiltration trenches with perforated pipe, and any infiltration structure deeper than the widest surface dimension. Owners and operators of existing and proposed **UICs** must register their structures with Ecology. Contact information and a description of the program can be found at Ecology's **UIC Program** website: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/grndwtr/uic/index.html>.

## **For More Information**

### **Contact**

#### **City of Spokane**

Development Services Center  
3rd Floor City Hall,  
808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.  
[www.BuildingSpokane.org](http://www.BuildingSpokane.org)  
(509) 625-6300

## **City of Spokane and Spokane County Resources**

### **City of Spokane Stormwater Compliance Guide**

<http://www.spokaneriver.net/spokanestormwater>

### **City of Spokane Commercial Permit Process, including pre-development conference application and commercial application packet**

<http://www.buildingspokane.org/commercial-permit-process>

### **City of Spokane Engineering Plan Review Application**

<http://www.spokaneengineering.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Engineering-Plan-Review-Application-Web.pdf>

### **City of Spokane Engineering Plan Review: Stormwater Intake Checklist**

<http://www.spokaneengineering.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Engineering-Stormwater-Intake-Checklist.pdf>

### **Spokane Regional Stormwater Manual**

[http://www.spokanecounty.org/data/engineers/srsm\\_apr08final/SRSM\\_April2008Final.pdf](http://www.spokanecounty.org/data/engineers/srsm_apr08final/SRSM_April2008Final.pdf)

### **City of Spokane Municipal Code**

<http://www.spokanecity.org/services/documents/smc/>

### **City of Spokane Wastewater Management**

<http://www.spokanewastewater.org/>

## Washington State Resources

### **Washington Stormwater Center: Business Resource Program**

<http://www.wastormwatercenter.org/business/>

### **Eastern Washington Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control Field Guide**

[http://www.douglascountywa.net/departments/swu/pdf/Final\\_Field\\_Guide\\_11\\_0603.pdf](http://www.douglascountywa.net/departments/swu/pdf/Final_Field_Guide_11_0603.pdf)

### **Spokane Riverkeeper's "How to Meet Ecology's Industrial Stormwater General Permit Requirements"**

<http://www.spokaneriver.net/spokanestormwater>

### **Washington Department of Ecology General Stormwater Information**

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/stormwater/index.html>

### **Washington Department of Ecology, "How to Meet Ecology's Construction Stormwater General Permit Requirements"**

<https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/publications/9937.pdf>

### **Washington Department of Ecology-Construction Stormwater General Permit**

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/stormwater/construction/>

### **Washington Department of Ecology-Industrial Stormwater General Permit**

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/stormwater/industrial/index.html>

### **Washington Department of Ecology-Underground Injection Control (UIC) Program**

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/grndwtr/uic/index.html>

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**Learn more: Spokane EnviroStars [www.spokaneenvirostars.org](http://www.spokaneenvirostars.org)**

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