Sewage Spills and Cleanup

MAJOR OVERFLOWS

University personnel are to inform Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) whenever a sewage spill greater than several gallons occurs. Telephone (509) 335-3041 during business hours and 911 at other times.

Immediate Notification

Notify EH&S immediately if the spill:

- Is in a food service or food preparation area.
- Is in any public area where there is a potential for human exposure.
- May enter or flow into surface waters (streams, ponds, lakes, wetlands) or storm drains.

Surface Waters, Storm Drains

Properly trained personnel should attempt to prevent the spill from entering surface waters or storm drains prior to notifying EH&S.

If sewage from a spill actually enters or flows into surface waters or storm drains, EH&S contacts the Washington State Department of Ecology within 24 hours of being informed of the incident.

Other Incidents

For less serious incidents, contact EH&S when reasonably feasible, e.g., the next morning for a spill occurring the previous evening.

CLEANUP PERSONNEL

Personnel who perform sewage spill cleanup must be properly trained in accordance with the departmental bloodborne pathogen plan and employ good personal hygiene practices.

Uninvolved Individuals

Cleanup personnel are to ensure that individuals not involved in the cleanup and disinfection of the sewage spill remain out of the area until the contamination has been removed and the area disinfected.

MINOR OVERFLOWS

When a toilet overflows or drain backs up and the overflow volume is less than several gallons, contact Facilities Services, Operations or Housing Services for cleanup. It is not necessary to notify EH&S in such cases.

SEWAGE DISPOSAL

Cleanup personnel are to use the sanitary sewer system (toilet, sewer manhole, or floor drains) to dispose of sewage. Sewage is NOT to be disposed of in storm drains, gutters, ditches, surface waters or any other location where it could enter surface waters, cause groundwater contamination, or result in human exposure.
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**EH&S FUNCTIONS**

It is the responsibility of EH&S to help insure that sewage spills are cleaned up properly in a safe and sanitary manner in order to protect public health and the environment.

Environmental Health and Safety provides training and guidance to help ensure that sewage spills are cleaned, disinfected, and disposed of properly, and that WSU personnel use the proper personnel protective equipment in accordance with the departmental bloodborne pathogen plan.

On a case by case basis, EH&S may elect to coordinate the cleanup of spills and/or assist WSU departments in sewage cleanup and disinfection.