

Do You Know Where Your Floor Drains Go?

Floor drains are found at many small businesses such as dry cleaners, printers, manufacturing businesses and auto service companies. A common floor drain system includes a concrete trench which runs down the center of a shop floor. The trench is designed to capture water, cleaners, oil, dirt or other materials. Some shops have small rectangular or round floor drains connected to underground piping.

Some floor drains are necessary for day-to-day operations. Others are used for emergency purposes only. And, some floor drains don't seem to have any apparent use. *Do you know where the floor drains in your business go? Are you discharging wastewater or other fluids into your floor drains?*

It is very important that you know where all your floor drains lead and are aware of Ohio EPA's regulations that apply to your discharge activities. If you do not know where your drains lead or if you are using floor drains improperly, you could be contaminating nearby surface waters or ground waters.

Some floor drains lead into a sanitary sewer, where wastewater goes directly to a public wastewater treatment plant. Other floor drains lead to an on-site sewage treatment system like a septic tank. Sometimes floor drains lead directly to an underground holding tank or discharge to a waterway or to the ground outside. Ohio EPA's water pollution control regulations apply to all of these activities.

Discharges to a Wastewater Treatment Plant

A business that discharges industrial wastewater directly to a public wastewater treatment plant (also called a POTW) is subject to wastewater regulations. Often, the POTWs directly regulate the companies that discharge to them.

A large POTW may easily be able to handle the wastewater generated from your business. However, even large wastewater treatment plants are not generally designed to handle industrial wastes like chemicals, metals, oils, etc. They are designed to handle sewage-related wastes and wastewaters. Because of this, the treatment plant may require you to conduct "pretreatment" (e.g., removal of metals, oil or grease, etc.) before discharging your wastewater to them.

If your floor drains discharge to a POTW, you must contact and discuss your activities with them. You may be required to obtain a permit from the POTW for the discharge. If the POTW does not have an approved pretreatment program, a permit from Ohio EPA for the discharge may be needed. You may be required to treat the wastewater before it is discharged. The construction of a wastewater treatment unit requires a permit to install (PTI) from Ohio EPA *before* you begin construction.

NOTE:

You should NOT discharge industrial wastewater outside your shop onto the ground! Make sure your floor drains don't lead outside where wastewater could end up on the ground.

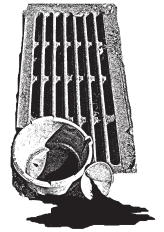
Discharges to Waters of the State

Any company that wants to discharge an industrial wastewater to waters of the state needs to get a permit (NPDES permit) from Ohio EPA. Examples of waters of the state include streams, rivers, lakes, ponds, marshes, waterways, wells and springs.

Wastewater discharges entering a conveyance system (like a ditch or storm sewer) that leads to a water of the state can also be subject to NPDES permitting.

The NPDES permit typically includes discharge limits and other requirements such as record keeping, reporting and monitoring. Other conditions of the NPDES permit can require a company to treat wastewater to remove harmful contaminants before it is discharged. The construction of a wastewater treatment unit requires a permit-to-install (PTI) from Ohio EPA before you begin construction.

If your floor drains lead to any water of the state, you **MUST** have a discharge permit from Ohio EPA for this activity. Contact the Division of Surface Water at your local Ohio EPA district office for more information on NPDES permits.



Do You Know Where Your Floor Drains Go?

Ohio EPA District Offices

District Office Map

www.epa.ohio.gov/divs.aspx

CDO Central District Office
50 W. Town St. Suite 700
Columbus, OH 43215
(614) 728-3778
www.epa.ohio.gov/cdo

NEDO Northeast District Office
2110 E. Auroa Rd.
Twinsburg, OH 44087
(330) 963-1200
www.epa.ohio.gov/nedo

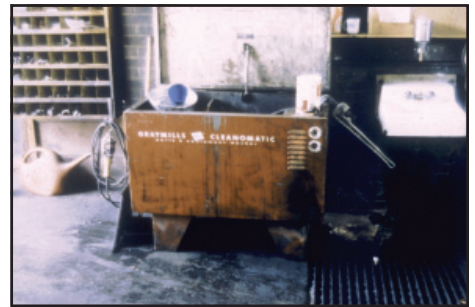
NWDO Northwest District Office
347 N. Dunbridge Rd.
Bowling Green, OH 43402
(419) 352-8461
www.epa.ohio.gov/nwdo

SEDO Southeast District Office
2195 Front St.
Logan, OH 43138
(740) 385-8501
www.epa.ohio.gov/sedo

SWDO Southwest District Office
401 E. Fifth St.
Dayton, OH 45402-6357
(937) 285-6357
www.epa.ohio.gov/swdo



Make sure you are **NOT** discharging wastewater to a water of the state unless you have an NPDES permit for the discharge.



DON'T handle waste or chemicals in areas where spills could enter a floor drain. This solvent parts washer is located right next to the floor drain.

Important Points to Remember . . .

- Check all your floor drains and make sure you know where they drain to.
- If you are using floor drains to discharge industrial wastewater into an injection well system such as a dry well or septic tank, you need to stop these discharge activities. You must find another way to manage your wastewater or obtain an Underground Injection Control permit from Ohio EPA.
- Make sure your floor drains **DO NOT** discharge industrial wastewater onto the ground. This discharge activity is illegal and you must find another way to manage the wastewater.
- If you are using floor drains to discharge industrial wastewater to a water of the state and you do not have a permit, you must stop these discharge activities. This includes discharges into storm sewers. You must find another way to manage your wastewater or obtain an NPDES permit from Ohio EPA for the discharge.
- If you are using floor drains to discharge wastewater to a local wastewater treatment plant, make sure the treatment plant knows about this activity. You may be required to conduct treatment on the wastewater before discharging it. You may also need to get a permit for the discharge.
- **DO NOT** put other fluids like oil, solvents, paints or chemicals into a floor drain. This could contaminate your property and expose you to large fines and clean up costs.