Landscape Maintenance SOP-42.0

Description of SOP:

Landscape maintenance activities include vegetation removal; herbicide and insecticide application; fertilizer application; mowing, trimming, and weeding. Vegetation control typically involves a combination of chemical (herbicide) applications and mechanical methods (mowing). All of these maintenance practices have the potential to contribute pollutants to the storm drain system.

Purpose of SOP:

The following procedures are to minimize the discharges of pesticides, herbicide and fertilizers to the storm drain system and the Arroyo Colorado and prevent the disposal of landscape waste into the storm drain system by collecting and properly disposing of clippings and cuttings.

Suggested Protocols:
Mowing, Trimming, and Weeding

- Whenever possible use mechanical methods of vegetation removal (e.g. mowing with tractor-type or push mowers, hand cutting with gas or electric powered weed trimmers) rather than applying herbicides. Use hand weeding where practical.
- Avoid loosening the soil when conducting mechanical or manual weed control, this could lead to erosion. Use mulch or other erosion control measures when soils are exposed.
- Performing mowing at optimal times. Mowing should not be performed if significant rain events are expected.
- Mulching mowers may be recommended for certain flat areas.
- Collect lawn and garden clippings, pruning waste, tree trimmings, and weeds. Chip if necessary, and compost or dispose of at transfer station.
- Use a street sweeper or blowers to collect clippings and debris instead of leaving it on the street or allow it to enter storm drainage systems.
- Clippings should be blown back onto the grass and kept off of streets and waterways.
- Never refuel or change the mower oil near storm drains or waterways.

Herbicides, Fertilizers, and Pesticides

- Follow all federal, state, and local laws and regulations governing the use, storage, and disposal of fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides.
- Use pesticides and herbicides if there is an actual need not on a regular preventive schedule
- Do not use pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers if rain is expected. Apply pesticides and herbicides only when wind speed are low (less than 5 mph)

- Do not mix or prepare pesticides or herbicides for application near storm drains
- Prepare the minimum amount of pesticides and herbicides needed for the job and use the lowest rate that will effectively control the problem
- Calibrate fertilizer and pesticide application equipment to avoid excess application
- Sweep pavement and sidewalk if fertilizer is spilled on the these surfaces before applying irrigation water
- Triple rinse containers, and use rinse water as product. Dispose of unused pesticides and herbicides as hazardous waste
- Dispose of empty pesticide and herbicide containers according to the instruction on the container label.

Training:

- Train crews in proper use of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizer application techniques to prevent pollution
- All employees that handle pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers shall be familiar with the most recent material safety data sheet (MSDS) files
- All employees shall understand stormwater discharge prohibitions, wastewater discharge requirements, and the best management practices (BMPs).
- A training log/sign-in sheet will be used to document training
- Employees will be familiar with the sites spill control plan and/or proper spill cleanup procedures

Spill Response and Prevention:

- Refer to SOP 11.0 Spill Prevention, Control, and Cleanup
- Have spill cleanup materials readily available and in a known location
- Clean up spills immediately and use dry methods (absorbents)
- Properly dispose of spill cleanup material (absorbents)
- Collected waste shall be disposed of properly