

## S440 BMPs for Pet Waste

**Description of Pollutant Sources:** Pets and pet-care can generate pollutants from waste, animal washing, and cage or kennel cleaning. Pet waste that washes into lakes, streams or Puget Sound begins to decay, using up oxygen and releasing ammonia. Low oxygen levels and ammonia combined with warm water can kill fish. Pet waste also contains nutrients that encourage weed and algae growth, and contribute to low oxygen and high pH in waters we use for swimming, boating and fishing. Most importantly, pet waste can carry viruses and bacteria that could cause disease and lead to beach or shellfish harvesting closures.

**Pollutant Control Approach:** Use a plastic bag or pooper scooper to clean up after pets. Properly dispose of pet waste.

### Recommended Operational BMPs for Pet Owners

- Regularly pick up and dispose of pet waste deposited on walks and at home.
- Put pet waste in a securely closed bag and deposit it in the trash. Do not place pet waste in yard waste containers because pet waste may carry diseases, and composting may not kill disease-causing organisms.
- Do not compost or use pet waste as fertilizer. Harmful bacteria, worms, and parasites that can transmit disease can live in the soil for years even after the solid portion of the pet waste has dissolved.
- Do not dispose of unused pet pharmaceuticals in a storm drain, in a toilet, or down a sink. Check with your local refuse collector for proper disposal locations of pet medications.
- When cleaning out cages and kennels, dispose of wash water down the toilet or a mop sink. Otherwise, wash directly over lawn areas or make sure the wash water drains to a vegetated area.
- Bathe pets indoors or in a manner that wash water won't be discharged to storm drains, ditches, or surface waters of the state.

### Recommended Operational BMPs for Recreation Areas and Multi-Family Properties

- Post signs at recreation areas and multi-family properties (that allow pets) reminding residents and visitors to pick up after their pets.
- Carefully consider the placement of pet waste stations at recreation sites and near multi-family properties that allow pets. Choose locations convenient for dog walkers to pick up a bag at the start of their walk and locations for them to dispose of it at mid-walk or at the end of their walk.
- Check pet waste stations on a regular basis to keep pet waste bags stocked and disposal stations empty. Consider signage to keep regular trash out of pet waste disposal stations to avoid filling them too quickly. Make sure pet waste disposal stations have a cover to keep out water.

- At multi-family properties with roof-top dog runs, ensure that stormwater from the dog run is not discharged to the stormwater system. Check with the local jurisdiction regarding roof-top dog run connections to sanitary sewer.

**Figure IV-7.5: Example of a Pet Waste Station**



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**Washington State Department of Ecology**

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