

S436 BMPs for Color Events

Description of Pollutant Sources: Color events are charity, religious, or commercial events that involve the use of powdered (typically cornstarch based) and/or liquid dyes. Because they typically occur outside, there is a high likelihood of the color material entering drainage systems and surface water unless measures are taken to prevent these illicit discharges from occurring.

“Biodegradable” and “non–toxic” do NOT mean that a substance can go into storm drains or water bodies. The dye material can harm aquatic organisms by altering water quality and chemistry. State and Federal environmental laws require local jurisdictions to prohibit non-stormwater discharges to storm drains. Dye material and any wash water are prohibited discharges.

Pollutant Control Approach: Plan for the event. Control the application areas for the powder or liquid dyes. Block off storm drain inlets prior to the event. Clean up the areas immediately after the event.

Figure IV-7.4: Powdered Dyes at Color Events



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Applicable Operational BMPs:

Pre-Event

- Create a map of your event that includes the following:
 - Event route.
 - Nearby streams, lakes, and ponds.
 - Start and finish areas.
 - Color application stations / areas.
 - Storm drain inlets and open stormwater system features (e.g., ditches, swales, bioretention, detention ponds) at the color application, start and finish areas.
- Create a Pollution Plan that details:
 - Measures taken to ensure that NO dye material, either during or after the event, will enter the drainage system.
 - How all dye material will be removed and disposed of.
 - What will happen in the event of rain (including addressing localized flooding, runoff, and collection of the stormwater).
 - Emergency numbers for the local jurisdiction in case dye material does enter the storm drain or water body.
- Use handheld brooms to complete the initial cleanup of paved surfaces. Follow with use of a vacuum sweeper truck on roads.
- Contract with a commercial street sweeping firm to clean paved surfaces. Have a storm drain cleaning contractor on-call for discharges to storm drains or emergency clean-up if necessary.
- Ensure that the commercial street sweeping firm has a plan in place for the proper disposal of sweepings from the event and associated air filters.
- Ensure that all clean-up will be completed prior to the next forecasted rainfall, or no later than 24-hours after the race event, and that the contractor will have enough equipment and staff on hand for the clean-up.

- Request a copy of the dye product's Safety Data Sheet (SDS) from the manufacturer or supplier. Review the SDS for potential safety and environmental hazards.
- Comply with local jurisdiction event permit requirements that contain stormwater pollution prevention BMPs. If no local event permit is required, provide to the local jurisdiction in charge of stormwater drainage and/or surface water management, in plenty of time (two weeks or more) prior to the event:
 - Copies of the map
 - Pollution prevention plan
 - Commercial cleaning contract
 - Dye SDSs
 - Names and contact information of the event officials for both during and after the event.

Preventing Runoff from Entering Drainage Systems and Water Bodies

- Protect storm drains by using berms, covering the drains, and using catch basin covers.
- Use care when removing berms, covers, and tarps to ensure no dye enters the storm drains.
- Prohibit participants from throwing dye within 100 feet of any stream or other surface waterbody.
- Prohibit participants from throwing dye within 100 feet of any open stormwater feature (e.g., ditch, swale, bioretention, detention pond).
- Set up color stations at least 100 feet away from any surface water or open stormwater feature.
- The route, start, finish, and color application stations must be at least 100' away from any permeable pavement or the permeable pavement must be completely covered.
- If the event will be held on a small, contained area, cordon off the area and place enough covers on the ground to cover the entire site. If possible, contain the color application to grassy areas where ground covers are unnecessary.

Event Clean-Up

- Dry off tarps and stained wet pavement with towels or absorbent pads.
- Use brooms or street sweepers to clean up paved areas. The fineness of the material may require sweepers with dust control systems.
- Do not use blowers to move dye material.
- Do not use hoses or pressure washers to rinse excess dye off of tarps, sidewalks or paved areas. If it becomes necessary to use water to clean surfaces, all the water must be collected and disposed of to the sanitary sewer system, with approval from the local sewer agency.

- Call the local spill response hotline immediately (24/7) if any colored water enters a storm drain or water body.
- Dispose of the collected sweeping materials, cleaning materials, and air filters appropriately.
- All litter and debris must be picked up and properly disposed of.
- All clean-up must be done within 24-hours of the race event.

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