



Veterinarian Clinic & Kennel Best Management Practices (BMPs)



Best Management Practices (BMPs) are simple management strategies that can decrease negative environmental effects, while saving you and your business money. In recent years water quantity and quality have become a very serious issue in Georgia. Everyone plays a part in protecting our potable water resources to ensure there is plenty of clean water today as well as for future generations.

HOW CAN POOR VETERINARY CLINIC & KENNEL PRACTICES NEGATIVELY IMPACT OUR WATER?

Animal feces is more than just a nuisance to step in. It's a health risk to animals and people, especially children, because it's full of bacteria that can make people sick. It's also a source of water pollution when it rains, washing the bacteria and nutrients into storm drains, ditches, and canals that feed our rivers. Since these pollutants aren't treated or removed before going into our waterways, they are very harmful to aquatic life and ecosystems, creating cloudy, low-oxygen, and sometimes deadly habitats for fish and other wildlife. Chemicals used in washing animals and cleaning facilities, when allowed to run into storm drains, negatively impact our waterways as well.



Other activities, such as the improper disposal of veterinary pharmaceuticals by flushing or pouring down the drain, can contaminate our waters even when treated. Neither septic systems nor municipal sewage and water treatment facilities can eliminate pharmaceutical contamination once a medication is poured down a drain or flushed down a toilet. A wide range of pharmaceuticals have been found in rivers, streams, groundwater, and drinking water nationwide. When the water is eventually reused, it can also cause unintentional human exposure to chemicals that were in the medications.

HOW CAN BMPs HELP YOUR VETERINARY CLINIC & KENNEL?

The implementation of BMPs may save you money by reducing or eliminating the need to employ other more costly or complicated procedures. Implementation of BMPs can result in a more aesthetically pleasing atmosphere for clients and can be a selling point to customers that are looking to support businesses that are environmentally friendly. And lastly, the implementation of BMPs can make you feel good knowing that you have decreased or eliminated your business' negative impact on the environment and you've done your part to help protect our waterways now and for future generations.

Please see the attached sheets detailing BMPs that you should consider incorporating into the daily activities at your place of business. If you have any questions or would like additional information or resources such as posters or coloring books, please contact us at (912)651-1440 and ask to speak to a Natural Resources staff member.



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GENERAL POLLUTION CONTROL

- Use safer, non-toxic &/or recycled products.
- Reduce the use of water where possible and use dry methods for cleaning.
- If water is being used in outdoor areas, contain any wash water and dispose of it in the sanitary sewer.
- Reuse and recycle materials.
- Move or cover activities and materials such as cleaning supplies to prevent contact with storm water.
- Reduce storm water flow across the site and redirect flows away from storm drains, gutters, and streets.
- Stencil on-site storm drains. For more information regarding the storm drain marking program, go to: <https://mpcnaturalresources.org/educational-resources-community-efforts/storm-drain-marking/>

SPILL CONTROL

- Create a spill cleanup kit with an adequate supply of materials readily available to be used.
- Clean leaks and drips routinely, using as little water as possible. Rags and damp mops are good for general cleanup, while dry absorbent material may be necessary for larger spills.
- Dispose of materials used to cleanup spills promptly and appropriately.
- Do not use bleach or disinfectants if there is a possibility that rinse water could flow to a street, gutter, or storm drain.
- Keep spills from entering the street, gutter, or storm drain.



PARKING LOTS/ DUMPSTER AREAS

- Keep parking lots clean of debris. Regularly clean up parking lots and the outside area surrounding the clinic. Sweep up refuse, cigarette butts and other trash and debris from outside areas.
- Don't place dumpsters close to storm drains.
- Keep the dumpster area clean and the lid closed. Don't fill with biomedical or liquid waste or hose it out.
- Pour wash water into a janitorial or mop sink that drains to a sanitary system. Don't pour it out onto a parking lot, alley, sidewalk, or street.



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ANIMAL FECES

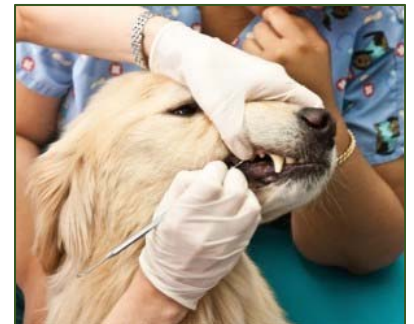
- Properly dispose of feces. No dumping of feces in wetlands, streams, any water feature, or storm drains. Provide doggy bags and a place to dispose of feces properly for clients walking pets on clinic property.
- Manage water within your site to control potential nutrient runoff. Divert roof runoff away from areas where animals are allowed to relieve themselves to minimize the volume of runoff containing nutrients.

ANIMAL HOUSING/ CARE

- If possible, house the animals in paved, covered areas. Where that is not possible, cover the ground with vegetation or some other type of ground cover.
- Clean animal handling/ housing areas frequently. Sweep areas and dispose of droppings, uneaten food, and other potential contaminants properly. When water is used for cleaning handling/ housing areas, do not discharge water to storm drains or other waterways. Block storm drains and contain runoff. Wash water should be collected and disposed of in the sanitary sewer.
- When washing animals, wash in an area that drains to the sanitary sewer or wash over a vegetated area so that the wash water can filter through the soils. Block storm drains and contain runoff to appropriate areas.

PHARMACUTICALS

- Reduce the use of pharmaceuticals by emphasizing preventative measures such as good hygiene, routine health monitoring, and immunizations and consider other therapies to treat animals. When pharmaceuticals are necessary, only treat animals as long as needed. Dispense only the minimum quantity for appropriate treatment. Use refills rather than dispensing large quantities of a medication.
- Maintain good records regarding all pharmaceuticals used.
- Maintain close inventory control to decrease expired/ unused drugs. Consider assigning responsibility for inventory control and disposal to one or a limited number of staff members. Whenever possible, return drugs nearing expiration to the distributor.
- Dispose of old pharmaceuticals properly. Never flush pharmaceuticals down the toilet or the drain. Train all employees on the proper disposal of all pharmaceuticals. Controlled substances and hazardous wastes are handled differently from non-hazardous waste, and must be disposed of in accordance with federal and state laws. The services of a commercial company may be needed to comply with those laws. Know which pharmaceuticals are considered hazardous waste and which are not. Please see the attached American Veterinarian Medical Association Best Management Practices for Pharmaceutical Disposal for proper disposal methods.





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CLIENT EDUCATION STRATEGIES

- Inform clients of proper protocols for medicine disposal and discourage them from flushing unused pharmaceuticals down the drains and toilets.
- Encourage clients to participate in local programs that take back medication. Chatham County lists area drop off facilities (Walgreens and Armstrong University) on their webpage (<https://recycling.chathamcounty.org/recycling-drop-off/hard-to-recycle-materials>)
- Encourage clients to pick up their pet's poop to prevent bacteria from entering the soil and waterways.

EMPLOYEE TRAINING

- Establish a regular training schedule, train all new employees, and conduct annual refresher training regarding the best management practices described within this document.
- Use a training log or similar method to document training.

For More Information Regarding Water Quality in Chatham County Please Contact

The Metropolitan Planning Commission

Natural Resources Division

110 East State Street

Savannah, GA 31401

(912) 651-1440



DISCLAIMER: The information presented in this document is intended for guidance purposes only and is not all-inclusive. The information may be of value as an educational or reference tool. However, we do not endorse any content or product that may be noted in this booklet. Please note that the laws and regulations are subject to change. It is recommended that you contact the municipality in which you will be working to obtain any required permits and/or specific regulations prior to beginning work.