



Know Before You Dig: Protect the Earth and Your Bottom Line with Regulation Compliant Curb Inlet Filtration

by **Dan Cleveland**

[Curb inlet protection](#) is the right thing to do for the environment ... and it's the law. Proper [curb inlet protection](#) helps to prevent sediment, chemicals and debris from entering storm water systems and ending up in our streams, rivers, lakes and oceans. These types of pollutants are very common on construction sites, and when they're picked up in storm water runoff and washed through curb inlets that have not been filtered properly, they do significant damage to our environment.

Waterborne construction site pollution destroys aquatic habitats, kills wildlife and can cause stream bank erosion. It's a serious matter, and sites that don't employ inlet protection solutions face serious fines.

Failure to meet state and federal regulations regarding inlet protection can cost developers and contractors thousands, if not millions, of dollars in fines. Take, for instance, a case involving one of the largest luxury homebuilders in the Southeast and Midwest. In late August of 2009, the builder was fined more than a half million dollars for not providing proper inlet protection at its projects. The good news for them is that they can pay the fine in four annual installments. The bad news is interest will be accruing.

Just days after that case was settled, a real estate developer in North Dakota was fined \$37,500 for allowing chemicals and concrete sediment to wash into nearby storm drains. Both of these companies could have saved a lot of money simply by using regulation compliant inlet protection products.

Professional inlet protection products, along with invaluable, time-saving advice on laws concerning construction sites and the environment, are simply a phone call away. Developers and contractors can rely on a [reputable company specializing in inlet protection products](#) to provide them with information and quality products that will help their sites run more efficiently and cost effectively while obeying laws and protecting the environment.

Products made for curb inlet filtration include [rolls](#) that are placed in front of curb inlets without storm grates, and [bags](#) and [sacks](#) that are anchored below grates. All of these



products, when professionally designed, should conform to curb shapes to properly guard against pollutants making their way past them.

Rolls, bags and sacks are made of special materials that allow storm water to slowly seep through them, while trapping sediment and debris for safe disposal. Some allow for the addition of absorbent filters that soak up oil, another common pollutant at construction sites.

All curb inlet protection products should eliminate, or at least reduce, the need to flush or clean inlets. When shopping for them, compare the aforementioned features and look into how each is installed, inspected and maintained. Ease of use counts for a lot on a construction site, where time is money.

Make sure the products are reusable, too. Quality curb inlet protectors should be able to be cleaned out and used time and time again, making them an even wiser investment.

Of course, ensuring that curb inlet protectors are compliant with current laws is of paramount importance, and this, again, is achieved most easily by relying on a [reputable inlet protection company](#). These companies make it their business to know the laws and to manufacture products within them, so seeking their guidance can save construction professionals many hours – and headaches – trying to find and comprehend the most recent regulation developments.

Provisions for proper inlet protection should be made before the ground is disturbed at any work site. A detailed listing of inlet protection solutions, as well as other measures being taken to prevent storm water runoff pollution, must be included in a construction company's storm water pollution protection plan (SWPPP). The SWPPP is a prerequisite to getting a [National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System \(NPDES\)](#) construction storm water permit, which must be obtained prior to work beginning.

NPDES permits are issued in the state where the work is being done, except for in a handful of states and in most Indian territories, where the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the issuing authority. Information on each state's permits and applications can be found at www.cicacenter.org

Details on SWPPP requirements can be found in the [Stormwater Resource Locator](#), which is part of the [Construction Industry Compliance Assistance Center's website](#). In addition, the EPA has published a free downloadable handbook explaining how to create and implement an SWPPP. Entitled [Developing Your Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan: A Guide for Construction Sites](#), this book includes a two sample SWPPPs, a customizable SWPPP template and a sample inspection form.



These tools, combined with [the right inlet protection company](#), can have you ready to break ground in no time. Getting compliant – and staying compliant – really isn't hard to do when you know where to turn for help.

Source:

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