

Street Sweeping: *Bringing Safety to Streets and Highways*

Power sweeping is considered a Best Management Practice under the EPA Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act. Here are some of the major reasons why maintaining a regular frequency of municipal sweeping, as well as mandating a rigorous level of sweeping on construction sites, is more important than ever before:

- Sweeping was started in the early 1900s for 'cosmetic' reasons. Today, material on the street has a much higher potential for being hazardous than ever before. Health issues from fugitive dust are responsible for over 1 million cases of asthma per year.
- Studies show that air sweepers and broom sweepers can pick up pollutants at a cost of less than \$5 and \$10 per pound, respectively. In contrast, a study by CalTrans showed that capturing pollutants in the runoff stream averages a whopping \$35 per pound – and that didn't include the cost of the real estate needed for most end-of-the-pipe retrofits.
- PM10-compliant street sweeping is a recognized Best Management Practice for construction and community compliance with NPDES Phase II stormwater run-off program.
- When roadway debris is kept cleaned up, citizens take more pride of ownership in their locale and tend to throw less litter from their vehicles.
- Weekly sweeping and cleaning is proven to maintain particulate compliance and can reduce suspended solids in downstream receiving waters by more than 75% (Source: EPA 832-F-99).
- When sand, grit and other smaller micron debris, especially, is allowed to accumulate on roadways, the road surface becomes more slippery and can contribute to a higher risk of accidents.
- Sand, dirt and other trash are abrasive, and will shorten the useful life of pavement, as well as the length of service time of any sealcoating, striping, etc.
- Having a regular sweeping program enhances community pride, perceived quality of life, and also has health and safety implications.
- When debris that is a food source remains unswept for a long enough period, it will attract rodents and other potentially disease-carrying or dangerous animals.