



City of Santa Barbara Storm Water (SWMP) Requirements for New Development and Redevelopment *Frequently Asked Questions*

Development and redevelopment projects within the City of Santa Barbara are required to install permanent storm water protection best management practices (BMPs).

Urban storm water runoff is the single largest source of surface water pollution in Santa Barbara. Storm water runoff picks up pollutants as it flows across impervious surfaces. **Impervious surfaces** are hard surfaces such as roofs, patios, driveways, walkways, and parking lots, which prevent infiltration of water into soil. For full definition see [Santa Barbara Municipal Code 22.87.010](#).

For additional information, see the [Storm Water BMP Guidance Manual \(TGM\)](#) or contact Creeks Division staff at JRumbley@SantaBarbaraCA.gov.

Q What are the thresholds and requirements for my project?

A	New or Replaced Impervious Surface (Sq Ft)	Tier	Requirement	Detailed Information in TGM
	1 - 499	1	Select and implement one or more Tier 1 BMPs.	Section 1.4.1 and Chapter 2
	500 - 1,999	2	Select and implement storm water BMPs to capture and treat runoff generated from a 1” storm from the new/replaced impervious area (or equivalent area).	Section 1.4.2 and Chapter 2
	2,000 - 14,999	3	Select and implement storm water BMPs to capture and treat runoff generated from a 1” storm from at least 95% of the project site’s impervious area.	Section 1.4.3 and Chapter 6
	15,000 or more	4	Select and implement storm water BMPs to meet Tier 3 requirements for Peak Runoff Discharge Rate and Water Quality Treatment. In addition, regarding Volume Reduction, Tier 4 projects must retain/prevent offsite discharge from all storm events up to and including the 95th percentile 24-hour rainfall event, which is currently 2.4” for Santa Barbara. Projects are required to retain the 1.2”, 24-hour rainfall event for all replaced impervious area and the 2.4”, 24-hour rainfall event for all new impervious area.	Section 1.4.4 and Chapter 6

Q Do ministerial projects (e.g., ADUs) have to comply?

A **Yes.** Regardless of whether a project is discretionary or ministerial, all projects that propose new and/or replaced impervious area or qualify as a public improvement in the right-of-way (see definition in Appendix A of TGM) must comply.

Q Which projects will be routed to the Creeks Division for storm water compliance review?

A All projects that propose new and/or replaced impervious area or qualify as a public improvement in the right-of-way (see definition in Appendix A of TGM) will be routed for compliance review.

Q Do I need to hire a Civil Engineer to demonstrate compliance?

A For Tier 2, Tier 3, and Tier 4 projects, hiring a Civil Engineer to demonstrate compliance with the requirements is recommended but not required. An architect or other design professional may produce the analysis.

Q Do I have to infiltrate storm water even if my project proposes a net reduction in impervious area?

A **Yes.** Infiltration is required unless it is not feasible due to contamination, high ground water, soils with insufficient infiltration rates, slopes, or other safety concern identified in writing by a licensed Geotechnical Engineer.

Q Can I wait until building permit submittal to include my storm water treatment features on my project plans?

A For discretionary projects, compliance with all storm water treatment requirements must be demonstrated prior to Design Review Final Approval. Projects that require Planning Commission review must submit a storm water report and grading and drainage plan that demonstrates compliance with requirements before your application will be considered complete. For ministerial projects, compliance will be determined as part of the building permit application review process.

Q How do I comply with the storm water treatment requirements?

A There are various techniques and landscape features that can be used to treat storm water. For more information, please see Chapters 2 and 6 in the TGM.

Q Is a storm water report required?

A Yes, if your project is Tier 3 or Tier 4. A template is available in Appendix B of the TGM.

For additional FAQs, please visit www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/SWMPFAQ.

Examples of storm water BMPs in Santa Barbara *Left to right:* Minimizing imperviousness at REI, permeable pavers on W. Cota Street, rain barrel in San Roque, rain water garden at Spencer Adams Park. Find more photos of local examples in the TGM.

