

Pollution Control Agency Offers Information on Ice Removal

Ice arena managers in Minnesota received a letter from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency in August regarding ice removal from indoor ice arenas. The letter was produced after the agency learned that ice had been removed from an indoor ice arena and stacked in a parking lot to melt and drain into the storm sewer system and surface water. The ice contained paint used to mark lines and whiten the ice surface. According to the Material Safety Data Sheet, the paint used in this instance was not classified as a hazardous material. However, discharge of the water contaminated with paint into the storm sewers and subsequently to surface waters is a violation of Minnesota Water Quality Standards.

“It may be acceptable to discharge the ice and paint to the sanitary sewer for treatment at a wastewater treatment facility, but there are a number of different paints used for ice making. You should contact the wastewater treatment operator and inform him or her of the specific chemical composition of the paints used,” said Mark Schmitt, supervisor of the Site Remediation Unit. “The operator should be able to tell you if it is acceptable to treat this type of waste at the wastewater treatment facility. If your ice arena is serviced by an on-site sewage treatment system it is unlikely that the system is able to treat the waste effectively and may actually be damaged by the discharge of such waste to the system.”

“If it is not possible to discharge this waste to a treatment facility, it may be acceptable to place the material on the ground where the water could infiltrate through the soil,” said Schmitt. “You should make every effort to retrieve the paint and dispose of it in the solid waste stream to reduce exposure to children and wildlife and to prevent contamination of ground water.”

Ice arena managers are urged to review Material Safety Data Sheets for their paints before disposing of the ice and to check with city or county government officials to ascertain if they regulate this activity. County officials should be able to determine if a rink is located in a wellhead protection area or other area sensitive to ground water impacts.