



TO: Environmental Services Managers, Surface Water Management Staff and
City of Tacoma Website

FROM: Michael P. Slevin III, P.E. 
Environmental Services Director

SUBJECT: Minimum Requirement #5 Roof Downspout Control Selection

DATE: August 13, 2013

Background

The City of Tacoma (City) Environmental Services Department has developed this guidance document to clarify the design criteria of the City's 2012 Stormwater Management Manual (SWMM).

Per Volume 1, Section 3.4.5 of the 2012 SWMM, projects shall employ roof downspout controls per Volume 3, Chapter 2 of the SWMM. Per Volume 3, Section 2.2 of the SWMM, the applicant is required to control downspout in the following order of preference:

- Rain Gardens (Section 2.4)
- Downspout Infiltration Systems (Section 2.6)
- Downspout Dispersion Systems – Only Allowed if it can be demonstrated that infiltration is not feasible. (Section 2.7)
- Collect and convey to the City system – Only Allowed if it can be demonstrated that infiltration and dispersion are not feasible. (Section 2.8)

The City has elected to revise the order of preference so that rain gardens and infiltration trenches are given equal preference. The new order of preference shall be as follows:

- Rain Gardens (Section 2.4) or Downspout Infiltration Systems (Section 2.6)
- Downspout Dispersion Systems – Only Allowed if it can be demonstrated that infiltration is not feasible. (Section 2.7)
- Collect and convey to the City system – Only Allowed if it can be demonstrated that infiltration and dispersion are not feasible. (Section 2.8)

The City of Tacoma has elected to provide equal preference for rain gardens and downspout infiltration systems because they will provide similar levels of flow attenuation when installed and designed per the SWMM requirements.