

Options to reduce staining

Ninety-nine percent of street staining associated with street sweeping is caused by excess landscape water in the gutter. The water can simply mix with the clay or dirt that is present causing mud or if the gutters are wet for more than a few days, naturally occurring algae will begin to grow.



Gutter broom at work.

The process of street sweeping uses a spinning broom with steel bristles to dig the debris from the gutter and literally tossing them onto the street so the sweeper can pick it up. The debris sits

on the street for less than a second before it is hit with a 250mph blast of air to lift it into the sweeper hopper.

Next time you are on the freeway, put your hand out the window and imagine *four times* that force hitting the street. Anything loose is quickly removed.

Unfortunately, wet debris and mud will leave a stain behind.

In order to reduce the staining and generally improve the appearance of the streets, the community has several options:

1. Eliminate the water in the gutters on sweep day by changing automatic sprinkler timers to not water on sweep day and the day before. This especially includes back yards that drain to the street. This



Backyard water draining to street.

option is **free** and will have the best results. This also will help the community stay in compliance with storm water laws.

The houses causing the water problems are often not the ones with the algae and muck out front. It is the downstream neighbors who must suffer with the slime, smell and unsightly appearance. Mobilizing those most affected to encourage their upstream neighbors to adjust the days they water often proves very effective. Remember: it is not how much they water, but rather what days they water.

2. Reduce the number of cars parked on the street on sweep day. Each car results in missing 3 car lengths or about 50 feet of curb. Twenty-five cars equals over four football fields.

Sweeping more of the curb allows better water flow, and drainage, resulting in less standing water and reduced algae growth.

Be aware that less cars are nice; however, water control will have 10 times the positive effect.

3. Increase sweeping to weekly service. Combined with #1, this will have great results. Any water will still cause staining; however, reducing debris will allow the water to flow better. Residents will notice a generally improved appearance between sweeps.

Weekly sweeping is easier to remember for residents and will also naturally improve parking.

4. Other options associations have tried to remove algae are high-pressure washing, steam cleaning, acid bath, and chlorine treatments. Each one only has temporary results. As long as water continues to flow, the algae and muck will return, sometimes in as little as 1-2 weeks.



Notice there is only staining on the water side.

Unfortunately, algae is a natural thing and will return. Nutrient rich water+time+sunlight=algae. While we can't change Mother Nature's formula, we can interrupt it. We can control the source of water two days per week and ensure it flows quickly away by keeping the gutters clean with frequent sweeping.

Bill's Sweeping Service, Inc.

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