

STORMWATER MATTERS

DON'T POLLUTE – DRAINS TO WATERWAYS

Have you ever wondered where all the water goes when it rains or after the snow melts? Some of it seeps into the ground or evaporates, but much of it runs off over the land or through storm drains and then flows into waterways (rivers, lakes, seas, and oceans). This runoff water is called: “**stormwater**”.

Stormwater picks up litter, sand, bacteria, oil and other chemicals as it flows over the land, and it carries these pollutants to our wetlands and waterways. Runoff from paved surfaces, such as roads, parking lots, and driveways, may contribute large amounts of polluted stormwater.

Simply by practicing the “good housekeeping tips” in this flyer, stormwater will be cleaner as it flows into our lakes and rivers. Cleaning up stormwater not only benefits your neighborhood, it also benefits the entire network of water bodies and land that make up our watershed. We all need clean water for drinking, swimming, fishing, boating, and for protecting wildlife.

Stormwater on parking lots and streets flows into **storm drains** so that the pavement won't be flooded. Storm drains connect to underground pipes that convey the stormwater directly to a nearby water body, usually without any treatment or cleansing. So whatever flows down a storm drain comes out in a nearby waterway, such as a wetland, stream, river, or lake. Many storm drains are being marked with a “storm drain marker”, pictured below, to remind people not to put anything down a storm drain.



What can you do to reduce stormwater pollution?

Follow these good housekeeping tips!

NEVER pour or sweep **ANYTHING** down a storm drain! This includes:

- Pet waste
- Motor oil
- Paint
- Trash
- Leaves

Don't block storm drains with refuse or debris

Car Care Tips:

- Maintain your car to prevent and/or repair fluid leaks
- Recycle motor oil, antifreeze, tires, and batteries
- Use commercial carwashes that treat and/or recycle the wash water
- If you wash your car yourself, wash it on the lawn or direct the water toward an area where it can seep in. Use small amounts of low/non-phosphate detergent.

Lawn Care & Garden Tips:

- Use fertilizer, pesticides, and herbicides sparingly
- Try using organic lawn care methods and products
- Mow 2 to 3 inches high to encourage dense growth and deter weeds
- Mulch lawn clippings and leaves back onto the lawn or in a compost pile
- Do not over-water your lawn; instead water deeply and less frequently
- Reduce lawn size in favor of rock gardens or natural vegetation
- Cover soil piles with tarps and replant bare areas to stop erosion

More ways that YOU can help:

- Pick up after your pet and dispose of droppings in the toilet or trash
- Drain your gutter downspouts toward plant beds or into a rain barrel
- Dispose of paint, oil, and other household chemicals at a hazardous waste collection site
- Join a stream team to help care for your local stream and waterways
- Coordinate a neighborhood storm drain marking or stenciling program
- Support community efforts to keep stormwater clean

Help spread the word – Stormwater Matters!