



Make your home the **SOLUTION** to stormwater **POLLUTION!**



Homeowner's guide to healthy habits for clean water



As stormwater flows over driveways, lawns, and sidewalks, it picks up debris, chemicals, dirt, and other pollutants. Stormwater can flow into a storm sewer system or directly to a lake, stream, river, wetland, or coastal water. Anything that enters a storm sewer system is discharged untreated into the waterbodies we use for swimming, fishing, and providing drinking water. Polluted runoff is the nation's greatest threat to clean water.

By practicing healthy household habits, homeowners can keep common pollutants like pesticides, pet waste, grass clippings, and automotive fluids off the ground and out of stormwater. Adopt these healthy household habits and help protect lakes, streams, rivers, wetlands and coastal waters. Remember to share the habits with your neighbors!

Do you know the difference between a **STORM DRAIN** and a **SEWER**?

STORM DRAINS collect water from outside our homes and businesses and carry it, untreated, directly to streams and rivers.

SEWERS collect water from inside homes and business and carry it to treatment plants, where it is cleaned before it reaches creeks, streams and rivers.

Remember: only rain water should go into storm drains...not pet waste, trash, oil, or other pollutants

Healthy Household Habits for Clean Water

VEHICLE AND GARAGE

- Use commercial car wash or wash your car on a lawn or other unpaved surface to **minimize** the amount of dirty, soapy water flowing into the storm drain and eventually into your local waterbody.



- Check your car, boat, motorcycle, and other machinery and equipment for leaks and spills. Make repairs as soon as possible. Clean up **spilled fluids** with an absorbent material like kitty litter or sand, and don't rinse the spills into a

nearby storm drain. Remember to properly dispose of the absorbent material.

- **Recycle** used oil and other automotive fluids at participating service stations. Don't dump these chemicals down the drain or dispose of them in your trash.

LAWN AND GARDEN

- Use pesticides and fertilizers **springly**.



When use is necessary, use these chemicals in the recommended amounts. Avoid application if the forecast calls for rain; otherwise chemicals will be washed into your local stream.

- Select **native** plants and grasses that are drought and pest resistant. Native plants require less water, fertilizer, and pesticides.

- **Sweep up** yard debris rather than hosing down areas. Compost or recycle yard waste when possible.

- Don't overwater your lawn. Water during the **cool** times of the day, and don't let water run off into the storm drain.

- Cover piles of dirt and mulch being used in landscaping projects to prevent these pollutants from blowing or washing off your yard and into local waterbodies. **Vegetate** bare spots in your yard to prevent soil erosion.

HOME REPAIR AND IMPROVEMENT

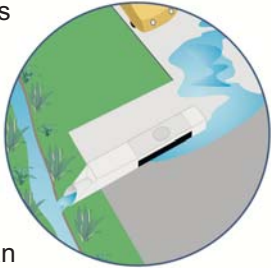
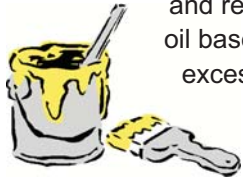
- Before beginning an out door project, locate the nearest storm drains and **protect** them from debris and other materials.

- Sweep up and properly dispose of construction debris such as concrete and mortar.

- Use hazardous substances like paints, solvents, and cleaners in the **smallest amounts possible**, and follow the directions on the label. Clean up spills **immediately**, and dispose of the waste safely. Store substances properly to avoid leaks and spills.

- Purchase and use **nontoxic, biodegradable, recycled, and recyclable** products whenever possible.

- Clean paint brushes in a sink, not outdoors. Filter and reuse paint thinner when using oil based paints. Properly dispose of excess paints through a household hazardous waste collection program, or donate unused paint to local organizations.



- **Reduce** the amount of paved area and increase the amount of vegetated area in your yard. Use native plants in your landscaping to reduce the need for watering during dry periods. Consider directing downspouts away from paved surfaces onto lawns and other measures to increase infiltration and reduce polluted runoff.

SWIMMING POOL AND SPA

Drain you swimming pool only when a test kit does not detect chlorine levels.

Whenever possible, drain your pool or spa into the sanitary sewer system

Properly store pool and spa chemicals to prevent leaks and spills, preferably in a covered are to avoid exposure to Stormwater.

PET CARE

When walking your pet, remember to **pick up** the waste and dispose of it properly. Flushing pet waste is the best disposal method. Leaving pet waste on the ground increases public health risks by allowing harmful bacteria and nutrients to wash into the storm drain and eventually into local waterbodies.



SEPTIC SYSTEM USE AND MAINTENANCE

Have your septic system inspected by a professional at least every three years, and have the septic tank **pumped** as necessary (usually every three to five years).

Care for the septic system drainfield by not driving or parking vehicles on it. Plant only grass over and near the drainfield to avoid damage from roots. Flush responsibly. Flushing household chemicals like paints, pesticides, oil and antifreeze can **destroy** the biological treatment taking place in the system. Other items, such as diapers, Paper towels, and cat letter, can clog the septic system and potentially damage components.

Storm Drains Connect to Waterbodies!



REMEMBER: Only rain down the drain!

For more information, visit:

www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater



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