

Make your home the Solution to Stormwater Pollution

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 shoreline. Anything that enters the storm sewer system is discharged untreated into the water bodies we use for swimming, fishing, and for providing drinking water. Polluted storm water runoff is the nation's greatest risk to clean drinking 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 drainage systems. Adopt these healthy household habits and help protect lakes, streams, rivers, wetlands, and coastal waters.

Health Household Habits for Clean Water

Vehicles and Garage Habits

- Use a commercial car wash or biodegradable, non-poisonous detergent to minimum soapy water from flowing into the storm sewer system and local waters.
- Check your car, truck, boat, motorcycle and other machinery for leaks and spills. Make repairs as soon as possible. Clean up spills or leaks with absorbent materials like kitty litter and sand. Don't rinse oil, gas or chemical spills into the stormwater drainage system.
- Recycle used motor oils and other automotive fluids at participating oil change service locations.

Lawn and Garden Habits

- Use pesticides and fertilizers sparingly. When using these chemicals, use the recommended amounts. Avoid application if the forecast calls for rain, chemicals will be washed into the storm sewer system and local waters.
- Select native landscaping plants and grasses. Native plants require less water, fertilizer and pesticides.
- Sweep up yard debris from hard surfaces rather than hosing the debris off these area. Recycle yard waste through your garbage waste hauler.
- Don't overwater your lawn. Water during the cool times of the day. Avoid letting water run off your yard and into the storm sewer drainage system.
- Cover piles of dirt and mulch being used in landscaping projects to prevent these products from blowing and washing off your yard into the storm sewer systems and waterways. Grow grass in the bare spots of your lawn to prevent erosion.

Home Repair and Improvements Habits

- Before beginning an outdoor project, locate and protect any storm sewers on your property to prevent debris from washing into the storm sewers.
- Sweep up and properly dispose of construction debris such as concrete and mortar.
- Use hazardous substances like paint, solvents and cleaners in the smallest amounts possible. Clean up spills immediately and dispose of the waste according to the product label.
- Purchase nontoxic, biodegradable recycled and recyclable products whenever possible.
- Use a rain barrel or consider redirecting downspouts away from paved surfaces and onto your lawn to increase infiltration into the earth and to reduce stormwater runoff.

Pet Waste Habits

- Remember to always pick up your pet waste and dispose of it properly. Leaving pet waste on the ground increases public health risk by allowing harmful bacteria and nutrients to wash into the storm sewer drainage system and eventually into local waterways.

Swimming Pools and Spa Habits

- Whenever possible drain your pool or spa into the sanitary sewer of your home. This prevents chemicals from entering the water ways before proper treatment.