

How can I prevent stormwater pollution?

By practicing healthy household habits, homeowners can keep common pollutants like pesticides, fertilizers, detergents, pet waste, grass clippings, and automotive fluids off the ground and out of the stormwater. Although you may not have a problem in your yard, the stormwater generated on your property can contribute to problems somewhere else. Stormwater comes from everyone's yards and driveways. When we adopt healthy household habits everyone shares in the results (improved water quality, reduced flooding, unimpaired access to roads, etc.). Adopt these healthy household habits and help protect lakes, streams, rivers, and wetlands. Remember to share the habits with your neighbors!

Lawn and Garden

- Use pesticides and fertilizers sparingly. Keep pesticides and fertilizers from washing into the stormdrains. Don't apply when rain is forecasted.
- Sweep up yard debris, rather than hosing down areas. Compost yard waste and locate your compost away from stormdrains.
- Don't over water your lawn. Maintain grass at 2¹/₂-3" to minimize the frequency of watering. Water during the cool times of the day, and don't let water run into the storm drain.
- Cover piles of dirt and mulch so they don't blow or wash off your yard and into the stormdrain. Vegetate bare spots in your yard to prevent erosion.

Home Repair and Improvement

- Sweep up and properly dispose of debris.
- Use hazardous substances like paints, solvents, and cleaners in the smallest amounts possible. Store substances properly and don't store substances outdoors. Clean up spills immediately, and dispose of the waste safely.
- Purchase and use nontoxic, biodegradable, recycled, and recyclable products.
- Clean paint brushes in a sink, not outdoors. Properly dispose of excess paints and paint thinner through a household hazardous waste collection program.
- Reduce the amount of paved area and increase the amount of vegetated area in your yard. Consider directing downspouts away from paved surfaces and onto lawns to reduce the amount of polluted stormwater entering the stormdrains.

Pet Care

- Remember to pick up after your pet and dispose of waste properly. Flushing pet waste is the best disposal method.

Vehicle and Garage

- Use a commercial car wash or wash your car on your lawn instead of your driveway to reduce the amount of polluted stormwater entering the stormdrain.
- Check your vehicles and other machinery and equipment for leaks and spills. Clean up spilled fluids with an absorbent material like kitty litter or sand. Don't rinse the spills into a storm drain.
- Recycle used oil and other automotive fluids at participating service stations.

Septic System Use and Maintenance

- Have your septic system inspected by a professional at least every 3 years, and have the septic tank pumped as necessary.
- 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. Household chemicals like paint, pesticides, oil, and antifreeze can leach into the groundwater and can destroy a septic system. Other items, such as diapers, paper towels, and cat litter, can clog the septic system

