

Ten Ways Homeowners Can Improve the Quality of Stormwater Runoff

1. Cover piles of soil, sand or mulch to stop them from being transported in stormwater. Plant grass where soil is exposed.

2. Sweep your sidewalks and driveways rather than hosing them down.

3. Put leaves and grass clippings in the compost, on the garden as mulch, or mow back into the lawn to recycle nutrients.

4. Divert roof water to lawns or gardens where it can safely soak in.

5. Keep pesticides, oil, leaves and other pollutants off streets and out of storm drains.

6. Keep cars tuned up and repair leaks - better yet, walk, bike or utilize public transportation.

7. Wash your vehicle on grass or over gravel. Use as little detergent as you can and pour any left over soapy water onto the lawn.

8. Dispose of household hazardous waste according to the label directions. Reuse turpentine once the paint has settled.

9. Clean up pet waste - bury it or flush it down the toilet.

10. Have your septic system inspected by a professional every 3 to 5 years and have the septic system pumped as necessary (usually every 3 to 5 years).



Reducing the Impacts of Stormwater Pollution

What is Stormwater?

Stormwater is water that originates during precipitation events and snow/ice melt that falls on rooftops, lawns, driveways and roads, and is carried away by a system of stormwater pipes or culverts and ditches. As it flows over the land surface, stormwater picks up and is contaminated by debris, chemicals, dirt and other pollutants. This untreated water is discharged into the water we use for swimming, fishing and drinking.



Why Should You Care?

- Polluted stormwater affects drinking water and is responsible for periodic beach closings. This can cause human health risks and water treatment costs to rise.
- Boating, swimming and other recreational activities are impaired due to sediment filled navigation channels.
- Bacteria and other pathogens discharged in swimming areas and create health hazards.
- Debris washed into the water can suffocate or disable aquatic life.
- Sediment clouds the water making it difficult for aquatic plants to grow.
- Excess nutrients cause algae blooms and deplete oxygen supplies.

Stormwater Pollutants of Concern

Coliform - Pathogens or bacteria, possibly from illicit discharges or feces of all warm-blooded animals and humans that can affect drinking water and is responsible for periodic beach closings.

Floatables - Debris that floats on or near the water surface and can be harmful or fatal to aquatic organisms.

Oil/Grease - A Pollutant that often enters the water through a storm drain or road runoff which damages animal's skin and can cause poisoning, blindness and liver damage.

Phosphorus - An element that is easily transported through sediment into the water. Excess phosphorus causes algae blooms, decreases water clarity and reduces oxygen levels.

Settleable Solids - Material heavy enough to sink and settle on the bottom of lakes or streams destroying aquatic habitats, spawning areas and may contaminate bottom feeding organisms.

Suspended Solids - Small solid particles transported through runoff and erosion that decrease water clarity and food supplies.

