



HOW RESIDENTS CAN PREVENT STORMWATER POLLUTION

Keep Storm Drains Clean

Storm drains are the openings at the curb, sometimes covered with a metal grate, which receive stormwater draining from streets. They are part of the city's storm drainage system that was designed to prevent flooding. Throughout most of the city, stormwater that runs from roofs, driveways, and streets goes down the storm drains and flows through a stormwater pipe directly to a stream or river without being treated at a treatment plant.

What's the problem?

When it rains, stormwater runs through yards, down driveways, and along streets, picking up substances such as lawn chemicals, pet waste, and motor oil along the way. This stormwater runoff can pollute our rivers and streams and harm wildlife. The illegal dumping of substances down storm drains such as soaps for washing cars, household chemicals, paint, and even products labeled as "non-toxic" or "bio-degradable" are also a problem. These substances contaminate local waterways and can be harmful to people and animals. Finally, if storm drains are not kept free from yard clippings, leaves, and trash, stormwater can back up into the streets, creating a flooding hazard for vehicles and pedestrians.



What can you do?

- Don't dump or place anything in a storm drain.
- Cover recycling bins on windy days so items don't blow out prior to pick-up.
- Properly store and dispose of yard waste and chemical containers from outside projects that could end up in a storm drain after a storm.
- When cleaning driveways and sidewalks, sweep yard clippings, dirt, and excess fertilizers into your yard instead of washing them away.
- Use lawn chemicals sparingly. Always follow label instructions and never apply immediately before a rain storm.
- Pick up after your pets by flushing the waste down your toilet or bagging it up and placing it in the trash.
- Recycle used motor oil and other automotive fluids at a household hazardous waste facility or automotive shop. Never place chemicals in the trash or pour down storm drains.
- Improve car-washing practices. Wash your car at a commercial car wash or in a grassy area.

Think of the items on the list as "the basics" of preventing stormwater pollution. Just adopting these simple habits can help improve water quality in our city.