

Stormwater Pollution Prevention for the Home



What is Storm Water Runoff?

In open fields, forests and wetland, most rain is absorbed by the soil or taken up by plants and trees. In developed areas, rain or snow that falls on impermeable roofs, parking lots, and roadways is not absorbed. This precipitation called stormwater or stormwater runoff enters local water bodies through storm sewer systems.

What is Storm Water Pollution?

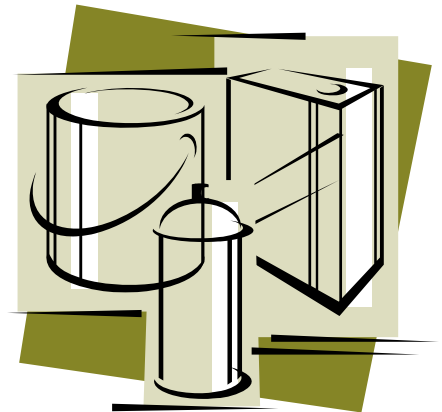
According to U.S. EPA's National Water Quality Inventory, polluted stormwater runoff is a leading impairment to U.S. water bodies that do not meet water quality standards of the nearly 40 percent of those surveyed. This discharge can destroy fish, wildlife and aquatic life habitats; lessen aesthetic value; threaten drinking water supplies and recreational waterways. Stormwater pollution comes from many different sources. Stormwater runoff can dissolve, pick up and transport many types of household products that cause this pollution. Automotive waste, lawn chemicals, paints and eroded soil are all pollutants.

Storm Water Pollution Prevention Tips — What Can You Do?

General Information:

Never allow any chemicals, yard wastes or any other materials to be washed down or put into storm drains. These drains bypass the wastewater treatment plant and go directly to the lakes and rivers.

If you must buy an item that is potentially hazardous, be sure to buy only as much as you need. Also, follow the instructions on the label for proper use, storage and disposal. Save unused materials for the local household hazardous waste collection event.



Auto Maintenance:



Automobile fluids from leaks or maintenance changes are another source of water pollution. Each year Americans dump enough used oil in landfills to equal approximately 13 spills the size of the Exxon Valdez spill! Even more oil is disposed of illegally. Much of this oil eventually finds its way into our water. Never put used oil or other chemicals down storm drains or in drainage ditches. One quart of oil can contaminate up to 2 million gallons of drinking water!



Clean up spilled brake fluid, oil, grease and antifreeze with kitty litter or other absorbent material. Do not hose them into the street where they can eventually reach local streams and lakes.



If you change your own oil/antifreeze, be sure to carefully collect all of the used oil and antifreeze in a proper container with a tight-fitting cap, and deliver it to a service or recycling center along with the oil filter.



Wash your car only when necessary; use a bucket to save water. Wash your car on a grassy area so the ground can filter the water. Or go to a commercial car wash that uses water efficiently and discharges the runoff to a treatment plant.



Landscaping & Gardening:



Minimize the need for pesticides by choosing plant species that are resistant to insects and disease. Landscaping with native plant species works best. Provide habitats for birds, bats, toads, ect. that prey on insect pests. Do not over apply pesticides and fertilizers. Follow the directions and use judiciously. Pull weeds by hand when possible.



Try “xeriscaping” your home with low-water-consumption plants. Save yourself time, money and water! Find more information on xeriscaping and native planting at:

www.csu.org/residential/greenback/water/xeriscape/item1123.html



Do not over water the lawn or garden. Over watering may increase leaching of fertilizers to ground and surface water.



When your lawn or garden needs watering, use slow watering techniques such as trickle irrigation or soaker hoses. Such devices reduce runoff and are more effective than sprinklers.



When you mow, set the blades to cut the grass two or three inches high. Most grasses are healthiest at this height and this also helps control weeds. Mow often and leave the clippings on the ground. They will help retain moisture and provide nutrients to the soil.

Painting:



Do not allow liquid paint products and wastes to drain into the gutter, street or storm drains.



Choose water-based paints (such as latex) instead of oil-based.



Save unused paint materials for a local household hazardous waste collection event, or reuse leftover paints when possible. Also, many local school art departments will take unused and leftover paint.



For More Information:

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Ohio EPA's Division of Surface Water Storm Water Program implements the federal storm water program for both industry and municipalities. Contact them at **(614) 644-2001** or www.epa.ohio.gov/dsw/storm/index.aspx