

# What is stormwater runoff?

*Stormwater runoff occurs when rain or snowmelt flows over the ground. Impervious surfaces like driveways, sidewalks, and streets prevent stormwater from naturally soaking into the ground.*

## WHY IS STORMWATER POLLUTION A PROBLEM?

Stormwater can pick up debris, chemicals, dirt, and other pollutants, and drain into the storm sewer system, which discharges into lakes, streams, rivers, wetlands and other waterbodies that we use for swimming, fishing and drinking supply.



## THE EFFECTS OF POLLUTION

Polluted stormwater runoff can have many adverse effects on creeks, rivers, lakes and water supply sources, as well as plants, animals and people.



- Household hazardous wastes like insecticides, pesticides, paint, solvents, auto fluids, and other chemicals can poison the aquatic life and pollute the drinking water supply.
- Sediment from unfinished or disturbed yards can help transport pollutants into waterways. Naturally occurring phosphorous found in soils is a nutrient contaminant. Sediment can also destroy aquatic habitats by clouding the water, making it difficult or impossible for aquatic plants to grow.
- Excess nutrients can cause algae blooms. When algae die, they sink to the bottom and decompose in a process that removes oxygen from the water. Fish and other aquatic organisms can't exist in water with low dissolved oxygen levels.
- Debris - plastic bags, six pack rings, bottles, and cigarette butts - that is washed into waterbodies can choke, suffocate, or dislodge aquatic life like ducks, fish, turtles and birds.

## STORMWATER POLLUTION SOLUTIONS

*Many routine activities conducted at your home can have significant negative impacts on our creeks, rivers, lakes and water supply. Through simple measures at home, you can help protect our natural resources.*

### LAWN CARE

Excess fertilizers and pesticides applied to lawns and gardens wash off and pollute streams. In addition, yard clippings and leaves can wash into storm drains and contribute nutrients and organic matter to streams.



- Don't overwater your lawn. Use waterwise gardening techniques. Perform regular irrigation system checks.
- Use pesticides and fertilizers sparingly, and only in recommended amounts. Use organic mulch or safer pest controls whenever possible. Sweep up excessive fertilizer from sidewalks and streets.
- Compost or mulch yard waste.
- Cover piles of dirt or mulch being used in landscape projects.
- Sweep leaves, grass, and other debris into the trash, and avoid washing these materials into the street or storm drain.

### SEPTIC SYSTEMS

Leaking and poorly maintained septic systems release nutrients and pathogens (bacteria and viruses) that can be carried by stormwater into nearby waterbodies. Pathogens can contaminate the drinking water sources and adversely impact the environment.

- Inspect and pump the system every 3 to 5 years, or sooner if necessary.
- Do not dispose of household hazardous waste in sinks or toilets.

### HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE

If disposed of improperly, many common household products can be hazardous to our environment as well as people and their pets.



- Always use and store the product according to the instructions.
- Keep chemicals in the original container or properly labeled.
- Take old or excessive product to your local Household Hazardous Waste Collection Center. Visit the city's website for more information.
- Latex paint can be disposed of in the regular garbage after it has been completely dried.
- Buy only what you intend to use. If you have some leftover, check and see if anyone you know can use it before bringing it to the Household Hazardous Waste Collection Center.
- Never dump household hazardous waste into creeks or streets!

### AUTO CARE

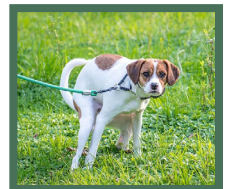
Washing your car and degreasing auto parts at home can send detergents, oils, and other automotive fluids through the storm drainage system. Dumping automotive fluids such as oils, gasoline, and coolants into storm drains or on the ground has the same effect as dumping them directly into streams, rivers and lakes.



- Use commercial car washes that treat or recycle their wastewater, or wash your car in your yard where the water can infiltrate soak into the ground.
- Have routine maintenance performed on your automobile to prevent leaks. When leaks are found, have them repaired immediately. Properly clean up fluids that have leaked.
- Properly dispose of automotive fluids. Utilize Household Hazardous Waste Collection Center for fluid disposal.
- Utilize commercial oil change companies and auto parts stores who will accept your used motor oil.

### PET WASTE

Pet waste can be major source of bacteria and excess nutrients in local waters.



- When walking your pet, properly pick up and dispose of waste. Leaving pet waste on the ground increases health risks by allowing harmful bacteria and nutrients to wash into the storm drain and eventually into local watersheds.