

HOW DOES IT BECOME A PROBLEM?

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

Why Is Stormwater Runoff A Problem?

When snow melts or it rains, water runs over roads, parking lots, sidewalks and lawns - removing oils, grease, sand and salt, tiny metals, soil particles and fertilizers. This stormwater runoff and pollutants it contains then flow directly into storm drainage systems. From there, it's carried without treatment into our streams, ponds, reservoirs and rivers.

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What Is Stormwater Runoff?

Stormwater can pick-up debris, chemicals, sediment and other pollutants and flow into a storm sewer system or directly to a lake, stream, river, wetland or coastal water. Anything that enters a storm sewer system is discharged untreated into the waterbodies we use for swimming, fishing and providing drinking water.



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POLLUTION
SOURCES AND
SOLUTIONS

THE EFFECTS OF POLLUTION

Polluted stormwater runoff can have many adverse effects on plants, fish, animals and people.



Lawn Care

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

Don't over water your lawn. Have a rain barrel to catch roof runoff and utilize that for lawn care. Avoid or minimize the use of fertilizers and pesticides for lawn care.

Compost or mulch yard waste. Don't leave it in the street or sweep it into storm drains.

EDUCATIONAL AWARENESS

Septic Systems

Leaking and poorly maintained septic systems release nutrients and pathogens (bacteria and viruses) that can be picked up by stormwater and discharged into nearby waterbodies. Pathogens can cause public health problems and environmental concerns.

Inspect your system every 3 years and pump your tank as necessary (every 3 to 5 years).

Pet Waste

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

When walking your pet, remember to pick up the waste and dispose of it properly. Flushing pet waste is the best disposal method.

Auto Care

Washing your car and degreasing your auto parts at home can send detergents and other contaminants through the storm sewer system. Dumping automotive fluids into storm drains has the same result as dumping the materials directly into a waterbody.

Use a commercial car wash that treats or recycles its wastewater, or wash your car in your yard so the water infiltrates into the ground.

Don't dispose of any hazardous materials (cleaning chemicals, auto fluids, greases) into storm drains. Properly dispose of them in sealed containers and take to a certified disposal facility. All facilities that change oil must accept used waste oil.

1

Sediment can cloud the water and make it difficult or impossible for aquatic plants to grow. Sediment also can destroy aquatic habits and fill in streams, ponds and lakes.

2

Excess nutrients can cause algae blooms. When algae die, they sink to the bottom and decompose in a process that removes oxygen from water called eutrophication. Fish and other aquatic organisms can't exist in water with low dissolved oxygen levels.

3

Bacteria and other pathogens can wash into swimming areas and create health hazards, often making beach closures necessary.

4

Debris, plastic bags, drink containers, cigarette butts and litter washing into waterbodies can choke, suffocate or disable aquatic life like ducks, fish, turtles and birds.

5

Household hazardous waste like insecticides, paint, solvents, used motor oil, and other auto fluids can poison aquatic life.

6

Polluted stormwater can often effect drinking water sources. This, in turn, can affect human health and increase drinking water treatment costs.