

# Make Your Home the *Solution* to Stormwater Pollution

## A Homeowner's Guide to Healthy Habits for Cleaner Water

Stormwater is water that originates during weather events like rain or snowfall. The stormwater that does not soak into the ground becomes surface runoff. When it rains the water is carried away from our homes and yards into the City's storm drains, keeping our properties and roadways from flooding. As this surface water flows over driveways, lawns, alleys and sidewalks it

picks up debris, chemicals, dirt and other pollutants. The polluted runoff flows into our stormwater system or directly into our streams, our harbor, and the Chesapeake Bay.

Polluted surface water is the nation's greatest threat to clean water. But by practicing healthy household habits, homeowners can keep common pollutants off the ground and out of

stormwater. Adopt these healthy household habits and help prevent stormwater pollution.

Please share these habits with your neighbors.



### Vehicle and Garage

- Use a **commercial car wash** or wash your car on a lawn or other unpaved surface to minimize the amount of dirty, soapy water flowing into storm drains and eventually into your local water body.
- Check your car, boat, motorcycle and other machinery for **leaks and spills**. Clean up spills quickly with absorbant material like kitty litter or sand. DO NOT rinse spills into storm drains.
- Recycle** used oil and other automotive fluids at your [Citizen Drop Off Centers](#).

### Lawn and Garden

- Use pesticides and fertilizers **sparingly**. Avoid application if the forecast calls for rain so chemicals are not washed into your local streams and storm drains.
- Select **native plants and grasses** that are drought and pest resistant. They will require less water, fertilizers and pesticides.
- Sweep up **yard debris**. Do not hose them down drains. Try [grasscycling](#) when you mow your lawn.
- Do not over water** your lawn. Water your lawn during cool times of the day, and don't let water run off into the storm drain.

### Home Repair and Improvement

- Before beginning an outdoor project, **locate the nearest storm drains** and protect them from debris and other materials.
  - Sweep up and properly dispose of **construction debris**.
  - Use hazardous substances like paints, solvents and cleaners in small amounts and follow the directions on the label. Clean up spills **immediately and safely**.
  - Clean paint brushes in a sink**, not outdoors. Filter and reuse paint thinner when using oil-based paint. Properly dispose of excess paints, and other hazardous materials through our [Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program](#).
- ### Pet Care
- When walking your pet, remember to **pick up the waste** and dispose of it properly. Leaving waste on the ground increases public health risks by allowing harmful bacteria to wash into the storm drain and local water bodies.

