



## Storm Water Pollution

### What is storm water pollution?

Any thing that gets in the path of a raindrop becomes storm water pollution. Another name for storm water pollution is non-point source pollution.

### How is storm water pollution a problem?

Every time it rains, storm water is carried directly to our surface waters. That means that storm water pollution can have detrimental effects to creeks, lakes, ponds, rivers and the oceans into which it drains.

### What types of pollutants are in storm water pollution?

Storm water can carry sediment, trash, automotive fluids like used oil and antifreeze, grass clippings, leaves, yard waste, excess fertilizers, animal waste, pesticides and anything else that gets in its way.

### What can citizens do to prevent storm water pollution?

There are several things citizens can do to prevent storm water pollution.

#### Household Hazardous Waste

- ◆ Never dump anything down a storm drain. All storm drains flow directly to creeks and lakes.
- ◆ Take used oil, paint and other household hazardous waste to recycling centers. (Visit [www.wipeoutwaste.com](http://www.wipeoutwaste.com) for the center nearest you.)
- ◆ Check your car for oil or other leaks.

#### Animal Waste

- ◆ Pick up after your pets. Dispose of animal waste properly in a trash receptacle or flush it down the toilet.

#### Lawn Care

- ◆ Apply fertilizers and pesticides exactly where you want them. Avoid over spraying them onto sidewalks, driveways or streets.
- ◆ Reduce the amount of fertilizers you need to apply by testing the soil in your yard first. (Visit [www.mecklenburgconservation.com](http://www.mecklenburgconservation.com) for a free test kit.)

#### Reducing Runoff

- ◆ Adjust sprinklers so that you're not watering the street or sidewalk.
- ◆ Redirect roof gutters to lawns, natural areas or rain gardens.
- ◆ Take your car to a car wash instead of washing it on the driveway.

#### Yard Waste

- ◆ Sweep up yard debris instead of washing it away.
- ◆ Bundle yard waste at the curb for pickup. (Visit [curbit.charmeck.org](http://curbit.charmeck.org) for pickup specifications.)
- ◆ Blow leaves and grass clippings back into your yard instead of leaving them in the street to wash down the storm drain.
- ◆ Use a compost bin to turn yard waste into a useful gardening product.

#### Planting

- ◆ Replant bare areas to avoid soil erosion.
- ◆ Keep invasive plants from growing in your yard. Remove them before they have a chance to grow and spread.
- ◆ Avoid planting exotic plants. Select only plants that are native to this area.

#### Volunteer

- ◆ Report spills, dumping or suspected water pollution to 704-336-5500.
- ◆ Clear clogged storm drains. Blocked drains cause drainage problems.
- ◆ Participate in Big Sweep, a community-wide creek clean up event.
- ◆ Volunteer for the Storm Drain Marking program to alert neighbors to the storm water pollution problem.
- ◆ Consider your group for the Adopt-A-Stream program and keep our creeks clear one stream at a time

### Is it illegal to pollute the storm drainage system?

Charlotte's Storm Water Ordinance states that it is illegal to discharge, cause to be discharged, directly or indirectly, or cause any pollutant to enter into the storm drain system unless permitted by an NPDES permit. Storm water is the only discharge permitted in the storm water system with exception of incidental Non-storm water flows which do not negatively impact the quality of the receiving stream, including:

- (1) Water line flushing, except super-chlorinated water line flushing.
- (2) Landscape irrigation.
- (3) Uncontaminated groundwater infiltration.
- (4) Uncontaminated, pumped groundwater.
- (5) Discharge from potable water sources.
- (6) Foundation drains.
- (7) Air conditioning condensate.
- (8) Irrigation water.
- (9) Springs.
- (10) Lawn watering.
- (11) De-chlorinated swimming pool discharge.
- (12) Street wash water.
- (13) Flows from emergency fire and rescue operations other than those resulting from negligence on the part of the person who owned or controlled the pollutant

When the City determines that a pollution discharge has occurred or is imminent, the City is authorized to employ whatever enforcement actions apply.