

Water Pollution Prevention It's Up to Us

Only “stormwater” is allowed in our storm drain system. This pamphlet tells you how to prevent waterway pollution from “stormwater” or “urban runoff.”

Rain, industrial and household water mixed with urban pollutants creates stormwater pollution. The pollutants include: oil and other automotive fluids, paint and construction debris, yard and pet wastes, pesticides and litter.

Urban runoff pollution flows through the storm drain to the Salinas River and the Reclamation Ditch that takes water and debris straight from Salinas streets to the Monterey Bay Marine Sanctuary. Each day, polluted urban runoff enters our rivers untreated, leaving toxic chemicals and trash to be carried downstream.

Urban runoff pollution contaminates our rivers, and ditches, harms aquatic life and increases the risk of flooding by clogging gutters and catch basins.

Oil and grease, for example, clog fish gills and block oxygen from entering the water. If oxygen levels in the water become too low, aquatic animals may be harmed and/or die.

Utilizing Best Management Practices (BMPs) will ensure cleaner receiving waters and a cleaner City.

Household Hazardous Waste Disposal

Household toxics—such as common household cleaners, paint products and motor oil—can pollute our rivers and poison the groundwater if not disposed of as hazardous waste.

- ✓ Take your household chemicals and toxics to the local Household Hazardous Waste Facility instead of dumping them on the ground, down the sink or into a gutter, street or storm drain.

Concrete & Masonry

Fresh concrete and mortar application materials can wash down or blow into the street, gutter or storm drain, posing a hazard to aquatic life and humans.

- ✓ Do not mix up more fresh concrete or cement than you will use.
- ✓ Store bags of cement and plaster under cover. Protect these materials from rainfall, runoff and wind, away from gutters and storm drains.
- ✓ Never dispose of cement washout or concrete dust onto driveways, streets, gutters or storm drains.

Painting

Paints and solvents contain chemicals that are harmful to aquatic life. Toxic chemicals can come from liquid or solid products or from cleaning residues on rags. It is especially important to prevent these chemicals from entering storm drains.

Paint Cleanup

- ✓ Never clean brushes or rinse paint containers into a street, gutter or storm drain.
- ✓ For oil-based paints, paint out brushes to the extent possible. Clean with thinner and then filter and reuse thinner.
- ✓ For water-based paints, paint out brushes to the extent possible, then rinse in the sink.
- ✓ When thoroughly dry, used brushes, empty paint cans (lids off), rags and drop cloths may be disposed of as trash.

Paint Removal

- ✓ Chemical paint stripping residue, including saturated rags, is a hazardous waste and should be taken to a household hazardous waste collection event.
- ✓ Chips and dust from marine paints or paints containing lead or tributyl tin are also hazardous wastes. Sweep them up and save them for a hazardous waste collection event.

Paint Recycling

- ✓ Reuse leftover paint for touch-ups or recycle it at a local household hazardous waste collection event, where it will be recycled or donated to a local graffiti paint-out program.

Landscaping & Gardening

Intensive gardening and landscaping increase the likelihood that garden chemicals and soil will wash into storm drains. Pesticides and herbicides not only kill garden invaders, they also harm insects, poison fish and contaminate ground and river water.

Use organic or non-toxic fertilizers and pesticides. Do not fertilize or use gutters or storm drains.

- ✓ Store pesticides, fertilizers and chemicals in a pesticides near ditches, covered area to prevent runoff.
- ✓ Do not blow, sweep, hose or rake leaves into the street, gutter or storm drain.
- ✓ In communities with curbside yard waste recycling, place clippings and pruning waste in approved containers for pick up.
- ✓ Conserve water by using a drip irrigation, soaker hoses or micro-spray systems.