CLEAN WATER NJ

WHAT IS STORMWATER POLLUTION?

Water from rain and melting snow that flows over lawns, parking lots and streets is known as stormwater runoff. This water, which travels along gutters, into catch basins and through storm drain pipes and ditches, usually is not treated, but then flows or is discharged into local waterbodies. Along the way, the stormwater picks up trash, toxins and other pollutants. This polluted stormwater can kill fish and other wildlife, destroy wildlife habitat, contaminate drinking water sources and force the closing of beaches because of health threats to swimmers.

Human activity is largely responsible for the stormwater pollution. Everything that we put on the ground or into the storm drain can end up in our water. Each of us has a responsibility to make sure these contaminants stay out of our water.

SO, WHAT CAN YOU DO?

IN THE HOME:

- Shop for nonhazardous, biodegradable and phosphorous-free household cleaning products.
- If you use water-based paints, rinse paint brushes in the sink. If you use oil-based paints, you can filter and reuse the thinner used to clean the brushes. Dispose of thinner through a local hazardous waste program.
- Sweep up dirt and debris and discard on your lawn or in the trash. Hosing off pavement washes pollutants into storm drains, which may lead to local creeks, bays and the ocean.
- Keep trash cans closed to prevent trash from scattering.
- If you use hazardous substances such as paints, solvents and cleaners, use them sparingly and according to the directions. Store properly to avoid spills.
- If you are working on a home improvement project, dispose of drywall and hardened concrete and mortar in the trash . Do not rinse concrete or mortar from a bucket into the street; dilute the mixture with water and rinse it into an area with vegetation or gravel.
- Never pour hazardous materials into the street, sewer or storm drain.

VEHICLE AND GARAGE TIPS:

- If you change your own oil or antifreeze, do it in a garage; never on a street. Use a self-contained oil pan and discard the oil at a local recycling center. NEVER discard oil, gas or antifreeze into a stormwater drain. Antifreeze should be discarded at a household hazardous waste facility.
- If you spill hazardous fluids, contain it immediately with rags or cat litter. Clean up the spill and properly dispose of the waste.
- Check for car for leaks and schedule regular tune ups. If you find leaks or drips, have your car repaired.
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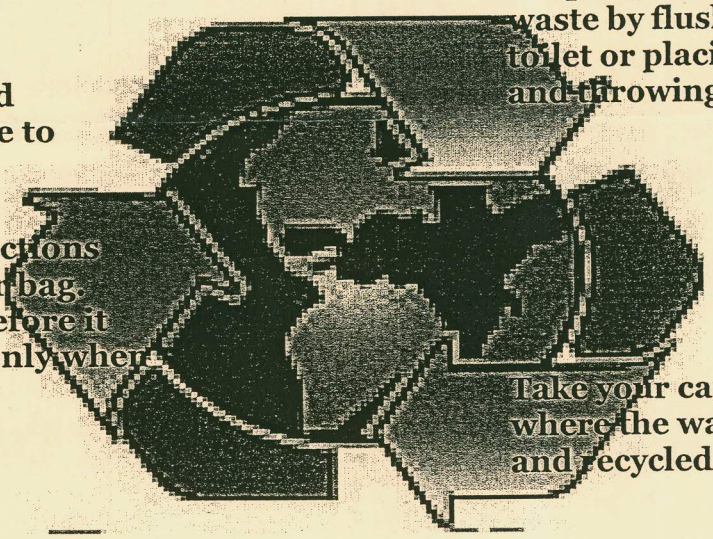
Properly dispose of your pet's waste by flushing it down the toilet or placing it in a bag and throwing it in the trash.

Recycle used oil at certified facilities and maintain your vehicle to prevent leaks.



Follow the directions on the fertilizer bag. Do not apply before it rains and use only when necessary

Take your car to the car wash where the water gets treated and recycled.

IN THE GARDEN:

- Conserve water. Do not over water your lawn. Adjust sprinklers if water runs into the gutter. Water during cooler times of the day.
- Reduce the amount of grass in your yard by planting ground cover. This reduces the need to fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides.
- Use a mulching mower instead of bagging grass clippings to reduce lawn wastes and to reduce the need for fertilizer.
- Do not put loose leaves or grass clippings in the street. Use them in a compost pile as a source for enriched soil.
- Use mulch in flower beds to prevent weeds from growing and to help absorb water.

For more information visit www.state.nj.us/dep/dshw/rrtp/hhwcps.htm for a list of local household hazardous waste facilities.