



## Stormwater Pollution Prevention Guide for Homeowners

### What is Stormwater?

Stormwater is rain and melted snow that runs off the roofs, lawns or paved areas, like driveways and roads and is carried away by a system of stormwater pipes or culverts and ditches. As it flows over the land surface, stormwater picks up or is contaminated by debris, chemicals, dirt and other pollutants.

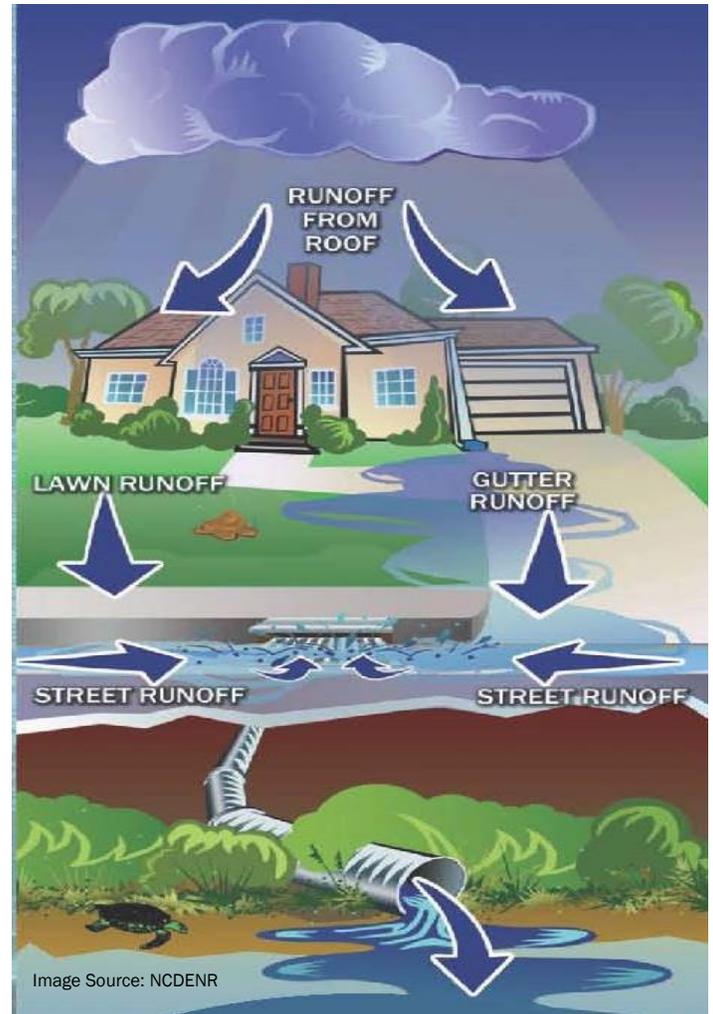
### Why Should I Care?

Anything that enters a storm drain system is discharged untreated into the water bodies we use for swimming, boating and fishing! According to the EPA, stormwater pollution is one of the most significant sources of water pollution today. Contaminated or polluted stormwater can lead to serious water quality problems. Found below are just a few pollution problems:

- Sediment clouds the water, harming important aquatic habitats.
- Excess nutrients cause algae blooms. Oxygen levels are depleted when the algae die and decompose. Fish and other aquatic organisms can't live when oxygen levels decrease.
- Bacteria and other pathogens (commonly found in fecal waste) discharged in swimming areas create health hazards and cause beach closings.
- Debris washed into the water can choke, suffocate or disable aquatic life (ducks, fish, turtles and birds).
- Polluted stormwater often affects drinking water sources – human health is at risk and water treatment costs rise.

### For more information on stormwater & resources visit:

- <https://nemo.uconn.edu/ms4/implement/public-education.htm>
- <https://www.epa.gov/npdes-permits/npdes-stormwater-permit-program-new-england>
- <https://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?q=325702>



### LAWN AND GARDEN MAINTENANCE

- Choose organic lawn chemicals whenever possible. Use fertilizers and pesticides sparingly, especially near waterbodies.
- Plant grass or vegetation where soil is exposed.
- Select native plants and grasses that are drought tolerant and pest resistant.
- Compost or recycle yard waste. Don't pile yard waste near or deposit into streams, wetlands or storm drains.
- Cover piles of dirt and mulch to prevent them from washing into drains.
- Sweep up yard debris, rather than hosing down areas.
- Redirect downspouts toward grassy areas, trees and shrubs, so that runoff from your roof can soak into the ground.
- Set a rain barrel under your downspout to capture water for another use.
- Plant rain gardens to help filter and soak up water before it runs onto the street.

### TRASH MANAGEMENT

- Put your cigarette butts and other litter in trash bins.
- If there is no trash bin handy, hold onto your litter until you find one.
- Pitch in and help clean up littered areas.
- Sweep up and properly dispose of construction debris like concrete and mortar.



## SWIMMING POOL AND SPA CARE

- Drain your pool or spa only when the test kit does not detect chlorine levels and obtain permission from DPW to drain to the storm or sewer system.
- Whenever possible, drain your pool or spa into the sanitary sewer system.
- Properly store pool and spa chemicals to prevent leaks and spills, preferably in a covered area.



## HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTES

- Use the least toxic products (biodegradable, Green Seal or EcoLogo certified) and appropriate amount of paints, solvents, or cleaners for the job.
- Store substances in leak proof containers inside a building or shed or under cover, away from rainwater and drainage areas.
- Clean up spills immediately using rags or absorbent material such as kitty litter. Sweep up absorbent material and dispose in the trash.
- Filter and reuse paint thinner.
- Dispose of excess paints and solvents during household hazardous waste collection programs.
- Dispose of solvent waste by following the instructions printed on the label.
- Never use a hose to wash down paved areas. This washes pollutants into the storm drains.
- Never pour wash water or chemicals down storm drains.



## SEPTIC SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

- Have your system inspected by a professional every three to five years.
- Pump your tank as necessary (every three to five years).
- Care for the septic leach field by not driving or parking vehicles on it.
- Plant only grass over and near the leach field to avoid damage from roots.
- Don't dispose of household hazardous waste in sinks or toilets.



## PET WASTE MANAGEMENT

- When walking your pet, pick up waste and dispose of it properly.
- Flushing pet waste is the best disposal method.
- Do not dispose of pet waste near storm drains or waterbodies.



## WINTER MAINTENANCE

- Avoid over salting/sanding walkways and driveways in the winter and use non-toxic products whenever possible. Sweep up excess sand after snowmelt.
- Do not apply salt on vegetation or near waterways.
- Do not dispose of snow/ice in wetlands or waterways or directly on top of storm drains.



## VEHICLE MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

- Use a commercial car wash or wash your vehicle on a lawn or other unpaved surface to minimize the amount of dirty, soapy water flowing into the storm drain, culvert, or ditch.
- Use organic or mild soaps and detergents.
- Always use a hose nozzle with a trigger and shut it off when you're not using it to conserve water.
- Check your car, boat, motorcycle, machinery and equipment for leaks and spills.
- Store automotive parts, such as batteries, engines, transmissions, and parts, that may have oily or greasy residue on them under cover and off the ground. Rainwater can wash pollutants off these parts and into the storm drains.
- Clean up spilled fluids with an absorbent material like kitty litter or sand.
- Recycle used oil and other automotive fluids at participating service stations. Don't dump these chemicals down the storm drain, in culverts or ditches, or dispose of them in your trash.

