
P/NW BOCES

Fact Sheet #7

Pollution Prevention Practices

REMEMBER: ONLY RAIN IN THE DRAIN

Stormwater runoff is precipitation from rain or snow melt that flows over the ground. As it flows it collects debris, chemicals, sediment and other pollutants that eventually get deposited in our streams, rivers lakes and oceans. To keep stormwater pollution out of these water bodies, we must learn to adopt environmentally friendly habits and simple guidelines summarized below.

VEHICLE MAINTENANCE

- Check your car and other machinery and equipment for leaks and spills and make needed repairs as soon as possible
- Clean up spilled fluids with absorbent materials like kitty litter or sand and remember to properly dispose of absorbent materials
- Recycle used oil and other automotive fluids at a participating service station. Don't dump these fluids into a storm drain or dispose of them into your trash

HOME REPAIR AND IMPROVEMENTS

- Before beginning an outdoor project, locate the nearest storm drain to insure that debris and other materials from your home repair project do not enter the drain
- Sweep up after completion of your repair project and remember to properly dispose of waste materials and debris
- Purchase and use nontoxic, biodegradable and recyclable products in your home repair and improvements project
- Clean paint brushes in a sink not outdoors and filter and re-use thinners.
- Properly dispose of excess paints through a household and hazardous waste collection program, or donate unused paint to local organizations

SWIMMING POOLS

- Drain your swimming pool only when your chlorine test kit detects no chlorine
- Whenever possible, drain your swimming pool/spa filter backwash water into a sanitary sewer system
- Properly store pool and spa chemicals to prevent leaks and spills, preferably in covered containers or a covered area to avoid exposure to stormwater

PET CARE

- Pick up and dispose off pet waste properly
- Flushing pet waste is best disposal method
- Leaving pet waste on the ground increases public health risks by allowing harmful bacteria to migrate into the storm drain and eventually into your drinking water supply and other water bodies

SEPTIC SYSTEM USE AND MAINTENANCE

- Have your septic system inspected and cleaned by a professional at least every three years
- Only plant grass over your septic fields; do not drive or park vehicles over the fields
- Do not flush household chemicals like paint, pesticides, oil and antifreeze, as these chemicals will destroy the biological treatment system taking place in the system
- Other items such as diapers, paper towels and cat litter can clog the septic system and potentially damage components

LAWN AND GARDEN

- Use pesticides and fertilizers sparingly
- Select native plants and grasses that are drought resistant
- Compost or recycle yard waste
- Vegetate bare spots to prevent soil erosion
- Cover exposed soil and backfill materials during a landscaping construction project